THE PLAIN GOLD RING

ROBERT KANE, S.J.

1914

Wm. L. Dustman

The Catholic
Theological Union
LIBRARY
Chicago, Ill.

A SELECT LIST OF NEW BOOKS.

THE LIFE OF JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN. Based on his Private Journals and Correspondence. By WILFRID WARD. With numerous Portraits and other Illustrations. 2 vols. 8vo. 36*s.* net.

SERMON NOTES. By JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN. Crown 8vo.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BISHOP CHALLONER (1691-1781). By EDWIN H. BURTON, D.D., F.R.Hist.Soc., Vice-President of St. Edmund's College, Ware. With 34 Portraits and other Illustrations. 2 vols. 8vo. 25*s.* net.

THE DAWN OF THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL IN ENGLAND, 1781–1803. By the Right Rev. Monsignor BERNARD WARD, President of St. Edmund's College, Ware. With 33 Illustrations. 2 vols. 8vo. 25*s.* net.

THE EVE OF CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION: being the History of the English Catholics during the first Thirty Years of the Nineteenth Century. By the Right Rev. Monsignor BERNARD WARD. With Portraits and other Illustrations. (In Three Volumes.) Vols. I. and II.—1803–1820. 8vo. 21*s.* net. Vol. III.—1820–1829. 12*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE THREE SISTERS OF LORD RUSSELL OF KILLOWEN. Sketches of Convent Life. By the Rev. MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J. With Portrait and other Illustrations. 8vo. 6*s.* net.

AT HOME WITH GOD: Prie-dieu Papers on Spiritual Subjects. By the Rev. MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

AMONG THE BLESSED: Loving Thoughts about Favourite Saints. By the Rev. MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J. With 8 Full-page Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE SERMON OF THE SEA, and other Studies. By the Rev. ROBERT KANE, S.J. Crown 8vo. 5*s.* net.

THE PLAIN GOLD RING: Lectures on Home. By the Rev. ROBERT KANE, S.J. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE WESTMINSTER LIBRARY.

A SERIES OF MANUALS FOR CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND STUDENTS.

Edited by the Right Rev. Mgr. BERNARD WARD and the Rev. HERBERT THURSTON, S.J.

THE MASS: a Study of the Roman Liturgy. By ADRIAN FORTESCUE, D.D., D.Ph. Crown 8vo. 6*s.* net.

THE NEW PSALTER AND ITS USE. By the Rev. EDWIN BURTON, D.D., Vice-President of St. Edmund's College, Ware, and the Rev. EDWARD MYERS, M.A. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., 39 Paternoster Row, London;
New York, Bombay and Calcutta.

A SELECT LIST OF NEW BOOKS.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI: a Biography. By JOHANNES JOERGENSEN. Translated by T. O'CONOR SLOANE. With Illustrations. 8vo. 12*s.* 6*d.* net.

LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. By FATHER CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C. With 13 Illustrations. 12*s.* 6*d.* net.

PRIMITIVE CATHOLICISM: being a Study of the Development of Christian Institutions. By Mgr. PIERRE BATIFFOL. Translated by HENRY L. BRIANCEAU. 8vo. 12*s.* 6*d.* net.

HISTORY OF THE ROMAN BREVIARY. By Mgr. PIERRE BATIFFOL. Translated by the Rev. ATWELL M. Y. BAYLAY. 8vo. 9*s.* net.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL ('Orpheus' et l'Evangile). By Mgr. PIERRE BATIFFOL. Translated by the Rev. G. C. H. POLLEN, S.J. With Appendix on the Decisions of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, 19 June, 1911, and 26 June, 1912. Crown 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

*** *The Appendix will be supplied gratis on application to the Publishers.*

OUR LADY IN THE CHURCH, AND OTHER ESSAYS. By M. NESBITT. With a Preface by the Right Rev. Dr. CASARTELLI, Bishop of Salford. With a Frontispiece. Crown 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

LEVIA PONDERA: an Essay-Book. By JOHN AYSCOUGH. Crown 8vo. 5*s.* net.

IN GOD'S NURSERY. By C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

BODILY HEALTH AND SPIRITUAL VIGOUR: a Book for Preachers and Teachers. By WILLIAM J. LOCKINGTON, S.J. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

CONFESSIONS OF A CONVERT. By the Very Rev. Mgr. ROBERT HUGH BENSON. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

CHRIST IN THE CHURCH: a Volume of Religious Essays. By the Very Rev. Mgr. ROBERT HUGH BENSON. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST. Sermons by the Very Rev. Mgr. ROBERT HUGH BENSON. SECOND IMPRESSION. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

A CHILD'S RULE OF LIFE. By the Very Rev. Mgr. ROBERT HUGH BENSON. Printed in Red and Black and Illustrated by GABRIEL PIPPET. SECOND IMPRESSION. 4to. (11¾ in. × 9 in.). Paper covers, 1*s.* net; cloth, 2*s.* net.

THE HOUSE AND TABLE OF GOD: a Book for His Children, Young and Old. By the Rev. WILLIAM ROCHE, S.J. With 24 Illustrations from Drawings by T. BAINES. 8vo. Cloth, 2*s.* 6*d.* net. Vegetable Vellum, 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

IN ST. DOMINIC'S COUNTRY. By C. M. ANTONY. Edited with a Preface by the Rev. T. M. SCHWERTNER, O.P., S.T.L. With 50 Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6*s.* net.

LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., 39 Paternoster Row, London;
New York, Bombay, and Calcutta.

THE PLAIN GOLD RING

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE SERMON OF THE SEA, and other Studies. Sixth Impression. 5*s.* net.

GOOD FRIDAY TO EASTER SUNDAY. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., 39 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

THE VIRGIN MOTHER. 1*s.*

Office of the 'Irish Messenger,' Dublin.

SOCIALISM. 1*s.*

THE CHURCH AND THE AGE. In two Parts. 1*d.* each.

FROM PETER TO LEO. In two Parts. 1*d.* each.

THE EUCHARIST. In two Parts. 1*d.* each.

ST. MARY MAGDALEN AND ST. AGNES. 1*d.*

Irish Catholic Truth Society, Dublin.

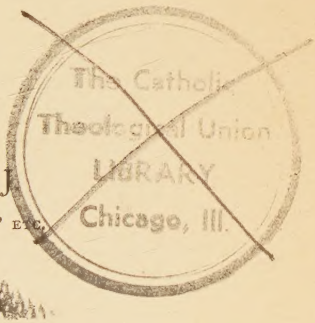
THE PLAIN GOLD RING

LECTURES ON HOME

BY

ROBERT KANE, S.J.

AUTHOR OF 'THE SERMON OF THE SEA' ETC.



NEW IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA
1913

All rights reserved

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/plaingoldringlec0000unse

252.52
K16p

7669

Nihil obstat.

J. N. STRASSMAIER, S.J.

Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur.

EDMUNDUS CAN. SURMONT.

Vicarius Generalis.

Westmonasterii die 2 Februarii 1911

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

INFANTA PAZ

PRINCESS LOUIS FERDINAND OF BAVARIA

THIS BOOK IS, BY PERMISSION, DEDICATED

PREFACE

THESE Lectures were delivered during the course of the last six years in many places in England and Ireland. Everywhere there were borne back to me echoes from homes that had been made brighter by my words. This much desired success encouraged me to hope that if they were published my book might bring comfort or strength to homes which my voice could not reach. Should I be the means of giving a little sunshine even to one unhappy home or of intensifying within one home that is happy the warmth of its sympathy or the holiness of its love, my labours will have received an exceeding great reward, nor will my life have been lived in vain.

ROBERT KANE, S.J.

MILLTOWN PARK, DUBLIN :
8th September, 1910.

CONTENTS

LECTURE		PAGE
I.	THE HALLOWED BOND OF HOME	1
II.	THE HUSBAND AND BREADWINNER	29
III.	HOME'S QUEEN AND HELPMATE	51
IV.	UNHAPPY HOMES	73
V.	THE HOMELESS	101
VI.	THE CRADLE AND THE GRAVE	129

FIRST LECTURE

THE HALLOWED BOND OF HOME

FIRST LECTURE

THE HALLOWED BOND OF HOME

'What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.'—Matt. xix. 6.

HOME !—what gentle memories of dear, dead days that word awakens within our mind ! What full, deep meaning that word conveys of a spot where peace should be always present, and where true affection should reign supreme ! What faithful messages are breathed through that word, of a sympathy that never fails and of a friendship that never forgets ! In time of joy, the word is like an old song, learned in days of childhood, that still ever echoes in our ear with the lullaby of our earliest love. In time of trouble or of trial, the word even though it recall many a

memory of disappointment, even though it bring back many a motive for regret, has still a strange sweetness in its sadness, a strange balm in its bitterness, for it speaks to our heart of an unselfishness that survives sorrow, and of a devotedness that defies death. Home !— the very word vibrates through all the deep, strong chords of character with the music of a beloved melody, with the tenderness of an innocent tear, with the sacredness of an heroic prayer. For home is that charmed circle within which live and love the nearest and the dearest friends of earth.

Home does not merely mean the house that happens to shelter one, nor only the furniture within. Home is something more than what is made of bricks and mortar, with added means of domestic use and comfort. Home is not merely that material dwelling-place where one may chance to eat and sleep, nor is it only the roof-tree which a man can call his own. Home must be indeed some spot on earth, for this is its material counterpart.

It may have its details of material surroundings, its sights, its sounds, its trifling objects cherished by childhood and sacred to age, its characteristics of position or structure to which endearing associations cling, its simple ornaments round which tearful memories cluster, its thousand nothings, unnoticed by the stranger, that are priceless heirlooms of love to your heart. But home must mean much more.

Home most of all means the hallowed resting place where linger the loves that are most sacred on earth. It is the temple of heart affection. It is the sanctuary blessed by noblest human unselfishness. It is the shrine consecrated to highest human love. Home means the bonds of blood and ties of tenderness which clasp into one close intimacy the hearts of those who hand in hand journey heavenward. Home is the moral circle within which minds and hearts share the same shelter, breathe the same atmosphere, bear the same burdens, sympathise in the same

sorrows, enjoy the same pleasures, divide the same toils, and contribute to the same success.

It is a moral union of thought and will, so that lives are linked together in the measure of one melody, with varying tone, throbbing harmoniously, like human chords, which, each in its own way, catch up and re-echo the same song of soul. Thus, home is the spot which souls united by blessing of love or bond of blood have made their own sweet paradise on earth. Home is that one place where our most cherished human hopes blossom in secure shelter, and where God's brightest blessings fall ; for there is no place like home.

Such is the ideal. It may indeed be often over-shadowed by weary mist of tears. It may sometimes be darkened by desolating tempest of grief. Around it wild winds of strife may shriek ; or upon it cold silent clouds of misfortune may fall like snowflakes. Yet the ideal is always there. However obscured it may be in the day of life's struggle,

or in the night of life's loneliness, it is often lit up in the evening of age with a glory of sunset, while in youth's dawn it is almost always brilliant with bright promise and coloured by warm enthusiasm. Thus it comes to pass that this ideal, in its truest and holiest aspect, comes before the thought of the man or the maiden whose heart begins to flutter forth from the parent nest, in order to seek for another and a dearer home. It is always old that old, old story ; yet it is always strange in the freshness of its revelation—the story of 'Love's Young Dream.'

Do not misunderstand, do not misjudge, the noblest instinct of human life. Alas! alas! there is nothing true, nothing good, nothing noble, nothing beautiful in human life, that has not its caricature. There is nothing lovable that is not exposed to the sneer of the conceited cynic, or to the laughter of the vulgar fool. What is most sacred in its majesty may, by a cunning buffoon, be made to look grotesque. What is most exquisite

in its simplicity may appear contemptible in the eyes of a stupid student. Thus even love has been warped into meaning either what in human idiotcy is most silly, or what in human brutishness is most foul. Of such meanings I do not speak. I do not speak of love that is false. I speak of love that is true.

There is a word that is the very name of God. Its realisation amongst creatures is Heaven; and the lost knowledge of it is Hell. All truth leads towards it, and from it all good comes. Its faithful likeness is sanctity; and its caricature is sin. It is the very root of unselfishness. It gives sap to whatever has real worth in it. Its flower is perfectness. This one great power in human life works in human ways. It may first dawn with the vision of a beautiful face, or its first echo may thrill its magnetic influence through the tones of a sweet voice, or its electric spark may first flash forth from the touch of a kind deed or from the nearness of

a noble character. But however simple its cause may seem, the power of love, if it be true, is sacred. It may be born of what is very human, but it lifts man or maiden towards what is divine. It lifts one above oneself. It takes one from out of oneself. It makes one better than oneself. For, if it be love, it does not look for gain or barter. If it be love, it does not turn inward, but it goes forth to bless. Therefore it is that true love is 'strong as death.' Therefore it is that true love offers with its love all the treasures of its life. Therefore it is that true love holds to its love with a devotedness unto death. Therefore it is that love's young dream looks towards the symbol of sacred constancy, the Plain Gold Ring.

Two ideas are chiefly suggested by the Plain Gold Ring. First, the sacredness of love, that is to say Christian Marriage is a Sacrament. Second, the faithfulness of love, that is to say the bond of Christian Marriage is unbreakable.

First, we must admit that Christian Marriage is a Sacrament. Of this amongst Catholics there can be no doubt. The Council of Trent ('Sess.' xxiv. can. i.) defines, 'Should any one say that Matrimony is not truly and accurately one of the seven sacraments instituted by Christ our Lord, let him be Anathema.' There are two classes of people who deny this truth. On the one hand, are all infidels, whether ancient or modern. Modern infidels usually attack the sacredness as well as the strength of the marriage bond under the mean mask of fiction. Amongst such writers are Ouida, Marie Corelli, Tolstoi, Zola, writers not only hostile to Christian holiness but even to natural honour. Some of them appear to be conscious of their own shamefulness. Thus, for instance, Zola would not allow his own daughter to read his own novels. We need not pause to answer such men or women. They are unable or unwilling to appreciate the beauty or the majesty of virtue, and we are now speaking of what is

very beautiful and very majestic in Christian life, the holiness of marriage. On the other hand, most Protestants consider marriage to be a mere civil contract. This false and unworthy opinion denies to marriage all supernatural sacredness and lowers it to the level of mere natural justice. Now every valid marriage amongst Christians is a Sacrament. But Protestantism, once it interfered with the doctrine of the seven Sacraments, drifted hopelessly into uncertainty about this whole matter, so that its thousand different sects hold thousand different opinions. Most Protestants believe that Baptism is a Sacrament. Few of them believe that Marriage is a Sacrament. Now as a fact every marriage of Baptised Christians is a true real Sacrament, and this whether they admit it or not. On this point we may appeal to the teaching of the early Church. In the fifth century the doctrine of the seven Sacraments, amongst them Matrimony, was held by the universal Church. In proof of this we have the unimpeachable

testimony even of our enemies. The heresies which broke away from the Church at or about that period, while they denied some one or other point of Christian Revelation, took with them in their flight this point of the seven Sacraments. Mark the force of this reasoning. Those old heresies were absolutely unlike the new heresies of the Reformation. The Reformers, in admitting the principle of private judgment, opened wide the door to every possible variety and difference of belief. The old heresies, holding tenaciously to the principle of Church authority, resolutely excluded any divergence of belief from that which their Church had always held. Again, the Reformers were radicals in religion. The old heresies were so staunch in their conservatism as to have become crystallised into one unchangeable form. Hence we know with absolute certainty that what the old heresies hold now, they held in the fifth century, and that what they held in the fifth century was, except on the point on which

they fell away, the teaching at the time of the Church that they left. But, furthermore, a teaching held by the universal Church in the fifth century must have come from of old, and if from of old, it must, according to the rule of Tertullian, have come from the beginning, and therefore from the Apostles, and therefore from Christ.

Many a witness of this Faith might be brought forward from amongst the Fathers. Tertullian ('Ad uxorem,' l. ii. c. 7) wrote, 'If then such Marriage is ratified in the sight of God, why should it not turn out happily, so as not to be harassed by weight of woe or point of pain or by other ills of life, since it hath the protection of Divine Grace.'

Again Tertullian wrote ('Ad uxorem,' l. ii. c. 9), 'How can we declare all the blessedness of this Marriage which the Church and her Sacrifice doth sanction, which her benediction doth seal, which the angels do proclaim, which God doth ratify?' St. Augustine ('De bono conj.' c. 24) wrote,

'In every nation, Marriage is good as a safeguard of chastity. But, amongst the people of God, Marriage hath the holiness of a Sacrament.' A Greek coin of the fifth century beautifully pictures this doctrine (compare Garrucci's work). Upon it the bride and bridegroom are represented with their right hands clasped. Christ stands in the middle holding and uniting them both. The inscription is 'The love of God.' This thought is expressed by Saint Gregory Nazianzenus (ep. 193), 'I put the two right hands, each in each, and I join them with the hands of God.' That Christian Marriage is a Sacrament is plain enough from the teaching of Saint Paul (Ephes. v.). The Apostle declares Christian Marriage to be sign and symbol of Christ's union with His Church. That this sacred significance is of Divine institution, we clearly gather from the fact that Christian Marriage is, according to St. Paul, a thing of wonderful and mysterious meaning, and that this meaning points

towards Christ's union with His Church. This latter union is of Divine origin and of supernatural grace. Therefore the union of husband and wife, as it is a sign, a great sign, full of wonder and of mystery, amongst Christians, must belong to the same Divine order of things as does its meaning and significance. But this great sign is a state which is brought about by the joining of husband and wife in wedlock. Now, a sign of supernatural grace, belonging to a state of Christian life, is, under the New Testament, creative of the grace which it signifies. Therefore Marriage is by Divine institution a creative sign of supernatural grace. Therefore Christian Marriage is a Sacrament.

The chief object of Christian Marriage is, in the words of an old writer, 'to be the nursery of heaven and to fill up the number of the elect.' The same writer describes the hallowed meaning of marriage in these words: 'Marriage in very many things makes the chaste pair to be like to Christ. This is a

great mystery; it is the symbolical and sacramental representment of the greatest mysteries of our religion. Christ descended from His Father's bosom and contracted His divinity with flesh and blood, and wedded our nature, and we became a church, the spouse of the bridegroom which He cleansed with His Blood, and gave her His holy spirit for a dowry, and Heaven for a jointure, begetting children unto God by the Gospel.'

In the second place, the bond of Christian Marriage cannot, except by death, be broken. This seems to follow from the fact that Christian Marriage is a Sacrament; for, being a divinely chosen sign of Christ's union with His Church, it must have a constancy and an enduring force like unto that which it represents. Hence Christ declared that no power on earth can break the Marriage bond. In the nineteenth chapter of Saint Matthew our Lord explains that the words of Adam speaking of his own Marriage were uttered

under prophetic inspiration, and were therefore the words of God. He who made man in the beginning said, 'For this cause, shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they two shall be one in flesh.' Now, since by God's law husband and wife are made one life, that life may not be destroyed by any power of man; for as one may not destroy one's own life because to do so would be to rebel against God's right, so the Divine oneness of Marriage is above all choice or right of man, nor can it be destroyed without the guilt of moral suicide. 'Wherefore,' Christ adds, 'what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.'

Again Saint Paul (1 Cor. vii. 10) declares that it is God Himself, not Paul nor other mere man, who forbids divorce. Now whatever may or may not have been the force of the Marriage bond amongst Jew or Gentile, Christ absolutely and emphatically promulgates His law that divorce in its sense of a breaking of the Marriage bond is always sinful.

This law is recorded in the Gospels. (Luke xvi. 18, Mark x. 11, Matt. v. 32.)

Hence, Divorce understood as the annulling of a marriage that was valid, cannot be granted by civil law. No civil law can touch the Marriage tie. King, Lords and Commons are powerless to undo a Sacrament of Christ: 'What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.'

In Matthew (xix.) Our Lord in answer to the question of the Pharisees whether divorce be lawful, declares that it is not lawful except in the case of unfaithfulness, but our Lord explains that divorce, even in the case of unfaithfulness, is only a separation, not a breaking of the Marriage bond itself; for He adds that to marry a divorced person is a sin against Marriage.

Time will not allow of our tarrying to dwell upon other arguments that prove this truth. Yet from out of the chorus of Holy Tradition we will listen to two of the greatest voices which throughout the ages re-echoed

the Word of God. St. Augustine ('De Nupt. et Concup.' c. 10) wrote, 'In such wise doth there remain between husband and wife, as long as they live, a sort of bond that neither separation nor unfaithfulness can ever break it. It doth remain in some such way as the soul of an apostate, even though it break away from union with Christ, yet bears upon it still the mark which it received in Baptism.' Listen to Saint Jerome, 'Wherefore, the Apostle (Rom. vii. 2, 3) cutting away every possible excuse most unmistakably defined that, as long as her husband lives, that woman sins against Marriage who marries another man. I will not allow you to plead to me the violence of him who runs away with her, nor the entreaties of her mother, nor the authority of her father, nor the influence of her crowds of relations, nor the plottings or insolence of her servants, nor the loss of her fortune. So long as her husband lives, be he an adulterer, be he stained with unnatural crime, be he covered with every sort of guilt,

be he on account of all these enormities rightly forsaken by her his wife, still he is her husband, nor can she, while he lives, espouse another man. Mark how the Apostle does not decide this on his own authority, but by the power of Christ who speaks through him.' (Ep. 55, Ad amandum, n. 3, 4.)

Divorce? Divorce, in its accepted sense as a breaking of the marriage bond, is a sin against God, an insult to woman, and a step towards her degradation. It is strange that learned people learn so little from what they read. We have the records of the past written in mud and dirt, with blood and tears to moisten them, where we read how this theory of divorce has worked itself out into humiliating human defilement. In the very glory of the culture of old Rome, 'mid the song of its poets, the eloquence of its orators, and the masterful plans of its statesmen, Seneca laments the daily repetition of divorce in the noonday of Rome's most brilliant era. Juvenal, who had caught quickness from the

finest culture and sharpness from the most cultured sin, lashed the sins of Rome's society with the thongs and knots of his wicked wisdom. One of his instructive facts is that one woman, under the genial law of divorce which our Socialists would bring into common use, had wooed and won and lost eight husbands within five months. What difference is there between this sort of thing and the strange painted woman shapes that flit through the midnight street or haunt the dens of hell? Divorce is an insult to womanhood and a step towards her degradation.

Divorce is an insult to womanhood. In this matter woman can never stand on equal footing with man. Her place is higher than man's place, when there is question of what is chaste. A man may be a most immoral man, yet if in outward social life he is a gentleman, his weakness is readily condoned by the weak, wicked world, and once he is well conducted again, he can leave his shame behind him, where he has left the

victim of his sin. But a woman who has fallen from her throne of purity carries her shame about with her, and brings it back with her to be the dishonour of her home. It is an insult to womanhood to think that her love can be tasted and then flung aside like a fruit that has lost its flavour. A man may stand this, but a woman cannot, for the love of a chaste woman is the gift of her whole life, and either it is reverently to be left untouched or it is to be lovingly cherished until death. Divorce is a step towards woman's degradation. I need not explain this. The world knows what foul and hideous reptiles women may become when they have lost their sense of shame and their allegiance to the highest ideal of the innocence of the maiden or of the mother. Divorce in the Socialist sense means that woman would be willing to stoop to be the mistress of one man after another. It is shameful; it is appalling.

Turn from that weird, wicked picture to

the true ideal of woman's dignity. Woman! She was created queen, and whether innocent or fallen, whether she must stoop to lift up or be herself lifted up, she must always, if she is to bear him blessing, she must always be man's queen; queen of his infancy, when, as home's queen she bent over his cradle teaching him, without knowing it, how good and loving and beautiful our great good God is; queen of his boyhood, when, as a weak sister that played with him, she was yet a something that he unconsciously venerated, a queen-type of sweetness, of fondness, of sympathy; queen of his manhood when that strange revelation came before him, a face, a voice, a presence that abashed all his thought into wonder, that absorbed all his heart in emotion, that subdued all his soul with the nearness of a boon that came from heaven, that took hold of all his life with a love that could only end with death, and in death must hope for its resurrection; queen, woman! if thou be true woman, thou art always queen; and if

man be true man thou art always his star, his helpmate, his comfort, his strength, his wisdom, his crown, his queen. Oh, look upon that ideal type of womanhood, which like a very star of hope and holiness shines above our storm-tossed and tear-distracted world. With all the innocence of a maiden, yet with all the fondness of a mother's love, Mary, simple daughter of our race, yet august Queen of Heaven, turns our thought towards what is noblest, yet tones our heart to what is dear. The ideal of true womanhood she sang in her Magnificat, the canticle of the triumph of pure womanhood: 'Behold all generations shall call me blessed.' She, the Madonna, blessed above all; but also blessed and blessing is every woman who is pure. To insult or to ignore the sàcredness of the marriage bond is high treason against the Madonna.

'Tis the lesson of the Plain Gold Ring. It is only a plain ring. There is upon it no quaint device, no pretty emblem. Upon it there is no ruby blush, no dark green depth of emerald,

no sheen of sapphire, no diamond flash. It is quite simple. It is quite plain. Deep down under the dank and heavy soil, amidst the stones and clay, the living root spreads its tender fibres out, and from the moist earth drinks the draughts with which it feeds the strength of the tree's gigantic stem and gives their loveliness or their lusciousness to flower or to fruit. Thus, all the strength and worth of social life, its fixedness of moral principle, its branching forth in science, art, or industry, its useful fruit or fascinating flower, all this living outcome of man's higher nature draws all its power from its roots in human homes held together by the Plain Gold Ring. It is plain ; but it is precious, precious as purest gold. Gold is less strong than steel, more heavy than lead, yet gold is the king of metals and mightily rules the world of matter. There is nothing curious in art, strange or stupendous in science, energetic in industry, useful for comfort, helpful to health or potent against disease,—there is nothing that man's eye can

see, nothing that man's hand can grasp, but can be bought with gold. Gold is the standard and the measure of all value. There is nothing that gold cannot buy, except one thing, and of this thing gold is only the lesser type and emblem. Gold is the emblem of love. No gold can buy love. Love is what is most precious in life, and therefore it is that when the loves of bridegroom and bride are made one love of Home they are united with a Plain Gold Ring. Plain and precious, it has also its meaning as a ring. The plain but precious atoms are moulded into one line which yet with ceaseless constant curve turns towards one central point, so that the line is never ending but makes one ever-revolving circle ;—it is a ring. Thus, too, the line of life, through all its daily round of toil or rest, of grief or joy, through all its plain but precious trifles of simple helpfulness or sweet sympathy, bends always, with unfailing faithfulness, with enduring devotedness, towards the one central point of the love that encircles the

Home with the perfectness and the deathlessness of a ring.

The love of the Plain Gold Ring can only fail when the hand which it clasped has crumbled to ashes, and when the warm, young heart which it dwelt in has become changed into dull, cold clay.

Wherefore on that great day when the heart of the young man fluttered forth from his lips to become one with the heart of his bride, he said to her, 'With this ring I thee wed.' Therefore did each say to each, 'I take thee to have and to hold, from this day forward for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part; and thereto I plight thee my troth.'

Oh! you whom God's holy happy Sacrament of love has wedded into one life, making your loves no longer two but one, oh hold to your plighted troth, in most absolute honour, in most high reverence, in abounding patience, in enduring generosity, in most gentle sympathy, in most fond affection, so that, whether

fortune smile or frown, whether riches be heaped around you or you be left on poverty's rugged road and sterile soil, whether the young quick blood beat sturdily in your veins or you sink and shiver in the grasp of disease or under the stroke of accident, even when the beauty of her maidenhood shall have faded away from the brow of the bride, even when the once stalwart frame of the bridegroom is crippled and bent, even when old age with its ills and its failings shall have come upon you, there may remain in your hearts, with a brightness of sun and a warmth of summer, the early romance of the days of your sweethearting, the freshness, the fervour, the faithfulness of love's young dream, the beloved lesson of the Plain Gold Ring.

SECOND LECTURE

THE HUSBAND AND BREADWINNER

SECOND LECTURE

THE HUSBAND AND BREADWINNER

'For also, when we were with you, we declared this to you: that if any man will not work, neither let him eat.'—2 Thess. iii. 10.

The word 'husband' means by reason of its Saxon root 'the master of a house,' as the first meaning of the Saxon 'word' lord is 'one who wins bread,' while the first meaning of the Saxon word 'lady' is 'one who serves bread.' Thus both the word which expresses the first idea of the head of a household and the word which expresses the highest idea of social dignity, join together in the one full sense that the owning and keeping of a Home rest upon a man's work. The thoughts which naturally suggest themselves on this subject

may be grouped under three chief ideas, typified by the Threshold, the Roof-tree, and the Fireside.

The Threshold may be taken as a type of the work that makes a home. The word in Early English meant the wood on which the corn was threshed; and as, in olden times, this broad beam of wood was laid in every house upon the floor, just inside the entrance, where in those days the work was done, the Threshold came to mean the foot piece of the entrance. Thus the root of the meaning was the work done, and the work was done at the very door. Now in another sense, this meaning still holds, for both the means of material comfort and the aids to moral good are got from work; nor has anyone a true title to rest in the happiness of a true home who has not first earned the right to enter there by some toil of head or hand.

The sentence passed on fallen man, that he should earn his bread in the sweat of his brow, was indeed a punishment; for, it took from

him the life of privilege in Paradise ; it flung him back to where he would have been had God not created him in grace, yet left upon him the duty of supernatural holiness and the need of supernatural help. We will not now dwell upon the strangeness of this Providence, nor explain how God has made this sad world of tears and toil more admirable in spiritual beauty and more fruitful in spiritual worth than was the garden where our first parents walked in unclouded happiness or reposed in untroubled peace. But what is to our point to think upon is this, that the privations of poverty and the wretchedness of want, which God permits to fall so often upon the workers of the world, may yet by them be made no curse, but a blessing ; while the wealth and ease which God has given to others, become, by their misuse, no blessing, but a curse.

Upon the Threshold of His home stood the Christ. Around about His feet had fallen, and lay in clustering curls of thin long ribbon bands the sweet-scented shavings of the wood made

smooth under the quick stroke of His plane. The strident sound of the plane, as it rapidly passed and repassed along the polished face of the timber, mingled with the sound of the quick breathing of the Divine Boy in the panting strain of His effort. Behold! upon that fair yet kinglike young brow are gathered thick, heavy, hot drops of sweat that fall in redeeming benediction upon the labour of the world. Yes! the curse of toil was changed to blessing by the sweat of the workman Christ.

It is indeed a fortunate fate, when not only is there work to do but one is also forced to do it. Even in many merely human ways work willingly undertaken and earnestly done brings with it blessing. Work gives health to the body and hardihood to the will, cheerfulness to the mind and grit to the character. Work alone can develop natural talent; and work alone can safeguard supernatural virtue. Yet, work is often shirked through sloth or it is not sought for through indolence. But as,

in the words of a great Art-critic (Ruskin, 'Modern Painters'), 'there is no beauty in any slothful animal,' so there is no true moral worth in any idle man, no true moral dignity in any idle woman. How could there be? Idleness is the frequent cause of physical disease. It is almost always the cause of mental depression. It is often the cause of moral depravity. But what particular bearing has this upon home life? No idle home is happy. For, in the first place work is often needed in order to earn our daily bread, or if one's support is safe without one's daily toil work may be needed in order to add domestic comfort; or if all this be already secure without our actual effort, yet there remains in the second place this grim fact that idleness creates tediousness, and tediousness with melancholy of mind provokes also irritation of temper, while irritability causes quarrel, and quarrel brings feud to the fireside. The lazy morning lost in unhealthy sleepiness or in indolent lounging till there is no time left for a morning

prayer, long hours given up to reading novels in which the most shameful sins are vividly painted in pretty pictures or the most abominable blasphemies bluntly set in pretty speech, protracted periods of scandalous gossip or of unbecoming talk, heavy intervals of annoying listlessness that leads to anger or of overwhelming depression that leads to drunkenness, an evening of brutal revelling or of wretched loneliness, ending with the sleep of stupor or of unpleasant dreams, will such a day as that help to make a home happy? Bah! Sloth is a deadly sin. It kills talent and it kills character. It kills cheerfulness and it kills kindness. It kills energy and it kills purity. Sloth like death is fruitful only in corruption. It is very fertile in decay. Within the stagnant soul are bred germs of every creeping sin and reptile crime, till the mind becomes dull or devilish, the character satanic or silly, the heart hard or putrid. The first evil influence of idleness is to poison the happiness of home.

Tell me not that you would gladly work but have got no work to do. Do you mean that you have got no work by which to earn money? When they are without work most people in this country wait until it comes to them and, while waiting, those of the lower orders generally stand as ornamental supports to decorate the doors of public-houses, whereas our would-be workers of the upper classes lounge about complacently with their cigarette or shut themselves up in their office to grumble against the bad times. In other countries, when a man wants work he goes to look for it; and when all possible means have failed, he tries his hand at impossible means; and he almost always proves, what our people seem unable to understand, that 'Where there's a will there's a way.' Even when one is not forced to labour for one's daily bread, one must not be idle. If you have got no work that you must do, make some work that you shall do. If you have no toil of hand, seek some toil of head. If you cannot use your

fingers, surely you can use your brains. Any man or woman on earth, who is neither a cripple nor a fool, can find or invent an occupation. Tell me not that you would like to work. Nonsense! It is not the work, but the will that is wanting.

The old saying of the old monks, 'laborare est orare,' 'to labour is to pray,' is in its natural sense most true. Whereas that man is unworthy of the name who is no more than an encumbrance upon the earth, a burthen upon his people, a drone amidst toiling humanity, a blotch upon creation: the man who is a willing and earnest worker in the world is not only one of Nature's noblemen, realising the dignity of his duty, accomplishing the fulfilment of his rights, achieving the glory of his vocation, but, more than this, since all his actions tend towards the carrying out of the fitting order of things, since every effort of his strength is adding to the wealth of nations, since the result of his hands' labour or of his head's toil is a development

of his own perfectness while it is a gift to his own home, so every drop of sweat on his brow is an offering of acceptable service unto God, an offering that is a prayer not of word but of work, an offering that is a consecration of his life and brings upon it the blessing of Heaven. The need and the nobility of work —behold the lesson taught by the Threshold.

The Roof-tree has a further teaching of its own. It means the strong and secure support that upholds the shelter beneath which the home, safe from cold or wet or storm, may rest in happy peacefulness. Hence the Roof-tree may be taken as a type of the prudence, economy, or thrift that enables the household to nestle together in comfort and joy amid dark and difficult days. The Roof-tree is a symbol of the care that keeps the home.

You will, no doubt, have often paused, touched with a sense of sympathetic loneliness, when, journeying through some bleak, wild spot of Ireland, you met, by the roadside, the ruins of a poor cabin. The fence

is broken down, and the cattle can wander where once the threshold had stood. Within, coarse rank herbage has grown, and over the spot of the old fireside luxuriant nettles are grouped in thick profusion. The walls are shattered and crumbling. The Roof-tree is gone, leaving the wet to weep and the wind to wail over the grave of a once happy home. Or in our cities, when you passed along the old streets where once the great folk of old days lived, now swarming with the children of dilapidated, dirty and often drunken tenements, where the lordly entrance opens into the spacious hall leading to the broad oak staircase, where the lofty rooms rise in artistic proportion, but where the floorings begrimed and torn tremble beneath one's step, where the frescoes or cornices of the ceiling are stained with mould or hid with cobwebs, and where through the rotting Roof-tree the damp drips down with inevitable ruin, did you wonder how was brought about this change from opulence and ease, from fun

and fashion, to hopeless wretchedness and dingy degradation? Yes, outside circumstance —political, social, economic—has had much to do with this. But there is another cause, without which outside circumstance never could have wrought such universal ruin. It was wilful waste that brought woeful want. The poor squandered their pence, and the wealthy squandered their pounds. There was no thrift. As it has been in the past, so is it still in the present. Times have changed indeed, but we have not changed with them. Our people high and low still live up to their last penny, if they do not live beyond it. Now were a man, on whose help no one had any claim, to squander all he owned and bring himself to absolute want, he would be indeed guilty of grave sin against the duty which he owes to himself and to his nation, but he would at least be innocent of the crime of cruelty against those of his own blood. But that the man, whose care should keep the Roof-tree secure

to be safe shelter for the loved ones of his home, should recklessly waste or rashly risk the means wherewith he should fulfil this sacred duty, this is more than sin, this is more than guilt, this is cruelty, this is crime. Mark, I say crime. It is no ordinary sin, it is a sin against one's own nature; it is a cruelty against one's own blood; it is a crime against one's own home. Of this crime those parents are guilty who neglect, when they can do so, to safeguard by thrift the future of their children. Of this crime those parents are most guilty whose means are ample, but who spend all their income, and die leaving their children paupers. Poverty, I mean real and downright pinching poverty, is a very terrible trial to face; but when it is poverty that comes after luxury, and hunger that comes after plenty, it is horrible, it is appalling. Beware lest the result of your wastefulness rest like a curse upon your grave, when your daughters wither in lonely lodgings or burn in fierce

temptation, when your sons bred in indulgence that made them worthless are breaking stones in New South Wales or tending cattle in Colorado.

If all classes were to level down at least fifty per cent. of their needless expenses the country would soon be prosperous. But while waiting for the world to be wise, be resolute in your own economy. However little lay something by. Be thrifty, and teach your children thrift. Add carefully and ceaselessly to the store that shall safeguard the Roof-tree of your home in the days when the ruins of other homes shall haunt the lonely wayside like ghosts of unforgiven crime.

The Roof-tree must be kept secure above the home by the thrift which levels down expense; but it also needs the levelling up of real hard work. Cardinal Moran in a speech delivered in Wexford not long ago, declared that if the people in this country would only work as hard as they must work

abroad there would be no need for emigration. In America, in Australia, in Germany, in France, in England, in Scotland, men and women who work must work hard. Our people at home have not, alas! the faintest idea of what real hard, earnest, thorough-going work is. The first result of this is that men give bad work for good money, which is dishonest, or in other words it is stealing. Another result is an evident injury done to the Nation. In a city of Ireland, which I need not name, an attempt was made some years ago by some kind gentlemen to provide cheap houses for the poor. Everything was carefully thought out, and owing to the generous aid and interest of these gentlemen, the plan should have been a success. But owing simply to the laziness and carelessness of the workmen, the cost of the houses was nearly double what such houses cost, even in Belfast. This question of work branches out into many intricate social problems. With the solution of these pro-

blems I have not now to deal. I offer you, however, some plain principles of common-sense with which you can make up conclusions of your own. Did you ever hear of the man who, when sawing off the branch of a tree, sat on the branch which he was sawing off? Did it ever occur to you that wages may be made so high as to cut away the support of a trade. Trade cannot prosper unless money is to be made out of it, not only by the men who do the work, but also by the men who provide the money. Again if you kill the goose you cannot have any more golden eggs. Without at all condemning all strikes it may be useful to remember that strikes have often been ordered by leaders in England, whose only personal interest was to draw a big salary by creating strife, with the result that many trades in Ireland lost most of their work which was transferred to England. Furthermore you would consider that man very foolish who should try with his two hands to stop the

tide of the Shannon. Now it would be much easier to stop the tide of the Shannon than to stop the current of civilisation. You can no more prevent the triumph of modern improvements and of modern machinery than you can make waters turn back. If you attempt it the result will only be that sooner or later you yourself will be carried away by the stream and overwhelmed, while the only remaining remnant of your folly will be the wreck of your home; or if your fellow citizens share in your absurd effort, there will be left only the dismal, dreary, decaying ruins of what was once a city.

Lastly, there is the lesson of the Fireside. Home means more than the threshold whither are brought and where are gathered the fruits of our daily toil. Home means more than the Roof-tree supporting the rafters under which we securely rest. It means more than the dwelling-place where those of one family eat and drink and chat and sleep. It means more than the abode of

comfort, more than the citadel of private life. Home means all these indeed, but it means much more. Home means the Fireside. It is from around the Fireside, as from the parent nest, that young loves first flutter forth on life, and as the birds at eve come home to roost, so 'tis towards the Fireside of one's childhood that the fondest memories of age turn back. Many and many a time the wanderer in far off lands, weary of limb and sore of heart, will have forgotten the scorching sand of the desert or the seething fever of the swamp or the bitter waste of salt sea waves, and as in his heavy sleep he remembered no more the callousness or the cruelty of the strangers around him, a dream of the dear old days that are gone will have dawned on his soul, a dream that showed to him again, with the light of the flickering flame, the circle of happy faces round the Fireside, till a mist of holy tears will have clouded his eyes, and a wave of holy love will have lifted up his

heart, bringing his wild, wilful, wayward spirit nearer to home, and therefore nearer to God.

O fathers, husbands, brothers, sons! pause when you reach that Threshold of your home. Pause before you pass under that Roof-tree. Pause before you sit at that Fireside. Pause! for that spot is sacred. Wherefore as from your feet you shake the dust or mud of the roadway, so from your very soul remove that rough grit which in your struggle with the world enables you to meet stranger or enemy, so from your mind brush away the suspicion or distrust which you have learned from your contact with selfishness or with sin; so from your heart take out the very last drop of bitterness. Pause before you enter your home, for that spot is sacred. From your brow smoothen away the wrinkle of care. Let your hard tightened lips unbend into a bright smile. Let the touch of your hand be gentle. Let the step of your stride be

7669

soft. Let the beat of your heart be warm and quick with hope and joy. Pause! that spot is sacred, sacred to peace, sacred to happiness, sacred to love. Pause! that spot is sacred. It is your Fireside. It is your own, your very own 'Home, sweet Home.'

THIRD LECTURE

HOME'S QUEEN AND HELPMATE

THIRD LECTURE

HOME'S QUEEN AND HELPMATE

'As the sun when it riseth to the world in the high places of God, so is the beauty of a good wife for the ornament of her home.'—Ecclus. xxvi. 21.

THE glorious sun gives to our Earth its beauty and its fruitfulness. Through the dark shadows of the night the quiet dawn breaks with brightening hope and fuller promise, spreading all over the eastern sky prophetic revelations of power and splendour soon to come, till, with a faint trembling of the air like a sigh of relief from the awakening Earth, with a sudden flush of triumph on the face of the happy heavens like a joy that came to hearts that were weary with waiting, the first rays of the sun, across the

dazzled edge of the horizon, shoot like golden arrows. Up, up, the great sun mounts majestically, till it stands in the high places of God. The sun teaches the birds to sing. The sun paints the flowers, and from its one white ray unravels the thousand exquisite colours and hues wherewith it gives to each petal or leaf a loveliness of its own. The sun renders the field fertile, making the corn golden and the fruit ripe. The sun draws from the bitter ocean draughts of purest water, and sends it in phantom-like form of cloud to far-off places, to fall in freshening rain upon the thirsty soil. The sun stirs with strange magic touch the chemical forces of the mineral, the loose linked affinities of the liquid, and the vapour's subtle intangible atoms, stimulating their energy and purifying their influence, for there is no power so strong in its action or so blessed in its health-giving as the power of the sunshine. Without the sun there were no light, no life, no loveliness.

Such—the metaphor is not mine but the wisdom of the Word of God—such is the influence of a good woman in her home. From her the rough and rugged road we tread gains strange charms, so that the stern cliffs of difficulties over which we must climb are robed in bright colours ; the weary waste of trial or the monotonous expanse of drudgery are made clear to our vision and easy to our effort. Her attractive influence can soften the coarser crust of man's more selfish nature, and from it win the gentleness of courtesy, the choicest flowers of refinement, the full, rich, ripe fruits of chivalrous devotedness or of generous work. Her sacred influence banishes the pestilential vapours that brood over hearts where her pure presence has not shone. Her holy love destroys the germs of spiritual disease, keeping the souls of the young pure, or bringing back to the souls that had been darkened by sin a second springtide of their earlier innocence. From out of the salt, bitter ocean of human life a

good woman will gather pure, sweet streams of sympathy and let them fall in soft, soothing tears to comfort sorrow, or she will pour them round the roots of hard or sickly characters helping them to ripen unto holy harvest. For as the sun when it riseth to the world in the high places of God so is the beauty of a good wife for the ornament of her home.

Now, the influence of woman is not to be measured by mathematics. It is too delicate to be defined by the ordinary balance of moral right. It is so vast as to spread beyond the horizon of the philosopher, yet it is so imperceptible as to defy our touch and elude our eye. Those who advocate the extreme theories of a woman's Rights seek unconsciously to limit her power and lessen her influence. If we speak of Right in its strict sense, woman's first Right is to obey. 'I permit not,' wrote Saint Paul (1 Tim. ii. 12, 13), 'a woman to use authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first

formed, then Eve.' Reason also teaches this. For, while it is true that one woman may be stronger than a man, another braver, another more stern, another more rough, another more intelligent in abstruse science or more despotic in character, as one man may be weak or wayward as any woman, yet it is a higher, wider, deeper truth that the nature of womanhood is not the nature of manhood, and that her broad characteristics at their best are those of man's helpmate, and are at their worst when she would be man's master. Moreover, should women seek to stand in all ways on equal footing with men, they forfeit their privilege, which is only offered to their weakness, and they lose, in the struggle for existence into which they rashly rush, that success which is only grasped by the stronger hand or fiercer character. Those unwholesome theories about 'Women's Rights' are hatched in the dovecots where spinsterhood sours into strongmindedness.

But, if we speak of Right in its wider

meaning, woman's first Right is to be man's Queen, and Home is her Empire. Her influence in her Home should be in a sense supreme. Man owns indeed the ultimate authority, but when woman is a true Helpmate, the authority of man is not only strengthened, brightened, blessed, but also uplifted, guided, directed by her influence. A triple aspect of woman's Queenship is that her Empire Home is guarded, ruled consecrated, by her help of hand, of head, of heart.

What help of hand a good woman can give, for the holiness as well as the happiness of her Home, is vividly shown by a contrast between two cities. Some years ago, when giving a mission in South Wales, I learned from the priests of the place, to my intense astonishment, that there was no need to speak against drunkenness. What! Ten thousand men earning good wages employed in the Government dock-yards, yet no drunkenness? None! During my stay of

several weeks, there was not one single case of anything bordering on intemperance. On the contrary, everywhere one could see signs of comfort. The small two-storied houses were clean and pretty, and each house was the property of the workman who dwelt in it. Men and women were all tidily dressed. Afterwards, when giving a mission in the pottery district in England, I met with a very different scene,—threadbare or untidy clothing ; people slinking in or out of shabby, comfortless tenements ; drunkenness everywhere and always ; the staggering figure in the street or crouched against the corner ; the night hideous with screaming women and brawling men. What was the cause of this strange contrast ? One cause extremely simple, yet of absolute evidence and of absolute efficacy ;—in the one case there was home life ; in the other there was none.

The workmen of the dockyard city went to their work in the early morning. All the day long the huge iron ribs of the skeleton

battleship rang with the thunder of a thousand hammers driving in the steel bolts. High up all over that giant frame of the future sea monster the hardy Welshmen worked hard. Out of the dockyard gates in the evening flowed a thick, long stream of living earnestness. The stream flowed fast yet silently, for the wearied workmen were hurrying home. As each man reached his own house, he entered to find his wife and children bright and pretty; the house scrupulously clean; a good hot dinner or supper perfectly cooked ready waiting for him. A quick, good wash, and the man sat down with his family at his own table, by his own fireside, under his own Roof-tree. After the meal, a quiet chat: and then the whole evening was given up to music. The Welsh are really fond of music. The Welsh learn their music thoroughly, and they do love it. In every house there is a piano; in many houses a harmonium also, and often a harp. Their singing is admirable for its truth and tenderness. That

is the record of every day in every home of the dockyard city.

Alas! alas! in the Potteries they have only houses; they have no homes. All the men and women, all the girls and boys, huddle each day into factories. The wives know nothing about cooking. Several doctors and several ladies who go amongst the poor assured me positively that it is quite an ordinary occurrence when a chop or a steak is to be cooked for the person to simply throw it on the fire, and when it is half burned to take it up and devour it. The women do not know how to mend their clothes, and consequently they must either get their stitching done for them by a stitching club or they must buy new things, or, which is almost always their choice, they go about in rags. Hence, when the men and women come back from the factories, they find only a comfortless, dirty lodging; no wholesome food. Hence they turn to the public house in order to seek a false comfort and fictitious strength from

stimulants. Hence the whole place and the the whole people are reeking with the abominations bred of the excesses of bad and brutalising beer.[1]

Now which side of this contrast reflects more accurately your own home-life? If the women do not give that help of hand which shall transform their dwelling place, be it rich or be it poor, into the abode of comfort and the resort of pure pleasure, they are guilty of neglecting or transgressing the first duty of their Queenship.

Under this heading may be grouped those ideas which, however trifling in appearance, are really paramount in importance, such as

[1] A critic who has read my MS. and who is himself from the Potteries considers that this passage is too unfavourable to that district. My answer is that, in the first place, my description was drawn from information given to me by many experienced persons living on the spot as well as from the impressions made upon me by the surroundings, and, in the second place, even should my picture be too highly-coloured, my argument remains untouched as it is still evident that there, and wherever there is practically no home-life, evils exist which are not to be found, in anything like the same degree, where home-life is to be found.

are the ideas of Thrift, of Tidiness, and of Taste. With regard to Thrift, in most homes wastefulness is frequent and inexcusable. It has been often said that a Frenchwoman could make a toothsome meal out of what an Irishwoman or an Englishwoman would throw away.

With regard to Tidiness, one of its advantages is that it prevents extravagance by avoiding endless little useless expenses.

With regard to Taste, we find ourselves face to face with the vexed question of woman's dress. Here we must keep cautiously between two extremes. Listen to Saint Jerome (Epist. ad Nepotianum), 'The overstraining after effect and the affectation of carelessness in dress are equally blameable and to be avoided, for the one savours of sensuousness, the other of self-conceit.' On the one hand extravagant expense and excessive adornment are sinful and unworthy of a Christian woman. 'Women in decent apparel,' wrote Saint Paul (1 Tim. ii. 9–10), 'adorning themselves with modesty

and sobriety, and not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but as it becometh women professing piety, with good works.' Saint Clement of Alexandria playfully remonstrates against the use of false hair by a bride (in 'Pœdag.' l. iii. 11). 'On whom doth the priest lay his hands? Whom doth he really bless? Surely not the woman who kneels before him in all her bridal attire; for, the blessing is placed on the false hair, and so perchance will follow the other woman whose hair it really is.' Now listen to the great Saint John Chrysostom ('Homil. 21 ad popul.'). 'Quietness in dress removes from a married woman all ground for unworthy suspicion, and with every possible additional link welds more securely together the happy bond of her wedlock.' Saint Chrysostom was very practical. Listen to a wise hint which he gives ('Migne Edition,' Paris, 1842, vol. xi. col. 541). 'It is yet at the same time true that feminine vanity can find many a loophole. Sometimes a simple dress may be so cleverly

arranged as to be far more effective than the show of downright rich material and artistic cut.' Now hear Saint Chrysostom's full advice, especially with regard to modesty in woman's dress when she comes to church ('Migne Edition,' Paris, 1842, vol. xi. col. 541). 'A robe in every way becoming to drape the form, becoming indeed yet not over fanciful, this is true adornment, this is without ostentation. But what do you mean? You come to pray God, yet you are begirt with gold. Have you come to the dance, or to a marriage festival, or to some great show? To those belong your golden bangles, your cleverly-dressed hair, your magnificent apparel. Now you have no need of those things. You have come to pray, to supplicate your God; you have come to entreat, to beg for mercy for your sins. You have come to ask your Lord that he may deign to pity you. Why all this dress and fashion? That is not the attire of one who comes to beseech forgiveness. How can you groan in spirit; how can you weep;

how can you pray with earnestness, while you are tricked out in all that foolish finery ? If you weep, shall not your tears appear only worthy to be mocked at ? We are not wont to look for tears amongst those who are dressed in the latest fashion. All that sort of thing is fit only for the theatre. Take away all that too theatrical get up. God will not be mocked at. Do not dress as an actress when you want to say your prayers. Leave that style of dress to the stage, and you as a good Christian woman despise and avoid it. Dress with modesty and pure becomingness.' On the other hand, good taste is not to be considered as a sin of vanity. Many of the Fathers write on this matter in a tone of almost absolute intolerance. But in order to understand the true meaning of their words, we must remember in the first place that they wrote or spoke in the days when Pagan taste was even more wanting in womanly modesty than the dressmakers of modern Paris ; and one must also know, in the second

place, that much of what the Fathers wrote was intended for women who, although living at home, had consecrated their virginity to God. The great Saint Thomas of Aquin (in his work On the Adornment of Women) lays down a broad and reasonable principle, namely, that since Nature intended women to be attractive, they are only obeying Nature's law, when, in reasonable way and measure, they further Nature's design.

We may conclude our suggestions about the Helping Hand of woman in her Home by a passage from Archbishop Trench. 'Before our great cotton and cloth factories arose, one of the principal employments in every house was the fabrication of clothing: every family made its own. The wool was spun into thread by the girls, who were therefore called spinsters; the thread was woven into cloth by their mother, who accordingly was called the weaver, or the wife: and another remnant of this old truth we discover in the word "heirloom" applied to any old

piece of furniture which has come down to us from our ancestors, and which, though it may be a chair or a bed, shows that a loom was once a most important article in every house: —Thus the word "wife" means weaver; and in the word itself is wrapped up a hint of earnest, indoor, stay-at-home occupations as being fitted for her who bears this name.'

How much a Home may owe to the Help of Head given by a good woman is beyond the power of words to express, for it reaches into those higher regions where influence is too fine and too delicate to be caught and copied by material symbols. Upon the intuition of moral instinct of a good woman a man may lean for advice, encouragement, or comfort, which he cannot get from another man. For, indeed, according to the natural order of things, man, even in the mental or moral world, is incomplete without woman's help.

You may have remarked that I have spoken as if Marriage were the only natural

state of life. This is in a broad way most true. The Church only recognises three states in Christian life, the state of Marriage, the state of Religion, and the state of Singlehood in the world, but this latter only when chosen or accepted from a supernatural motive. Mark that a 'state of life' does not mean a passing condition or accidental manner of life but a fixed, settled kind of life. The Church does not recognise any holiness whatever in bachelorhood, or spinsterhood, except in so far as they are either preparatory to, or at least open to, holy Marriage, or in so far as they are consecrated to holiness and good works. Wherefore those who are not called to Marriage, whether this be owing to their own choice or whether it be owing to outside obstacles, must understand that this is neither an excuse for sin, nor a toleration for tepidity, but an additional reason for watchfulness, and that they cannot be true children of the Church unless they aim at being thoroughly fervent Christian men, or thoroughly fervent

Christian women. Wherefore bachelorhood and spinsterhood are states of natural selfishness or of natural sinfulness unless they are made states of supernatural holiness and kindness. A quaint old author thus defends marriage against the attacks of selfish singlehood.

'Marriage hath more care than celibacy, but less danger; it hath in it less of beauty, but more of safety—it is more merry and more sad: it is fuller of sorrows and fuller of joys; it lies under more burdens, but it is supported by all the strength of love, and those burdens are delightful.'

In the last place, and above all, Home needs woman's Help of Heart. Woman is always the Angel of her Home. If she be not an Angel of Heaven she may become an Angel of Hell. No demon ever brought such sin on earth, no demon ever worked such terrible havoc amongst human hearts, no demon ever dealt such stroke of woe or tightened such strain of agony, as does the curse of a wicked

woman for the disgrace, degradation, misery, anguish, despair of her Home.

But woman may be, and often is, the living sunshine of God's Heaven within her Home, an Angel of light, of loveliness and of love.

O Christian women, wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, look up to that glorious ideal and try to make it true on earth. Home should be a human Heaven, and you are the Angels who can make it so. Dream your dream of happy Home. Dream till your very dream, born within your fancy, shall yet grow into real fact. Think not that all your influence is lost, because you see no sign of actual happiness, no proof of actual holiness. Be still an Angel of light, of loveliness, and of love. When you are dead, and over your cold heart the green grass grows, while, above your pillow of dank earth, even your name is being washed away from the tombstone by the rain or the sleet or the snow, your voice will still echo like music to a living ear, your face will be still present before living eyes, you will

yourself be still living by your living influence within the living memory of him who can never forget you, and, though the soft tears are streaming down his cheek and a sob is struggling in his throat, you will be to him still what you were in the old, old days, his Queen and his Helpmate of Home; and to husband, brother, or son, you will still be all the years of his life, in his living, loving heart, what you were to him once in his Home, an Angel of light, of loveliness, and of love.

FOURTH LECTURE

UNHAPPY HOMES

FOURTH LECTURE

UNHAPPY HOMES

'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'—Ephes. v. 25, 27.

LOUDLY the city clocks clanged out the evening hour. The distant church bells boomed their quiet Angelus. The factory whistles shrieked in strident discord. The day's work was done. Out from the bustling streets, the young man strode quickly into the country air. He had felt wearied and worried, yet his step is now brisk and his face bright; he is hastening home. But when he reached his cottage by the roadside, the sudden chill of an unknown dread smote upon his very soul; for there was

an unearthly stillness all around, and the door lay ajar. He pushed it open, and on the threshold stood aghast. A golden ray of the setting sun lights up, with remorseless splendour, every detail of that scene of horror. The room is in disorder ; here, a table with tossed and untidy preparation for some repast ; here, a broken chair left where it had fallen ; in the fireplace, cold cinders and ashes, with the half-burnt, half-raw fragments scattered over them of what should have been his dinner. Everything is still as the grave, except the loud ticking of the clock on the wall, the low wail of his infant child from the cradle, and the heavy breathing of his young and beautiful wife stretched in unconscious stupor on the floor. Is she dead ? Alas, no ! Ah ! if it were only that, it would not be so hard, so horrible. She is drunk. The young husband stands and stares. An agonising spasm has clutched his heart. His face is white as the face of the dead, but drawn into deep sudden ridges by quivering nerves like

cords. His lips are parted and trembling in purple coloured lines. His eyes are burning hot; but on his brow big cold drops are gathered. His brain is reeling. If he could only stop that clock; every tick is like a stab to his heart; each inexorable stroke shakes his whole frame with agony; for it is telling him over and over again what his darling young bride said to him on their wedding day as they knelt side by side before the altar of God. He sees her innocent blushing young face, the sweet little smile on her lip, the deep dark depths of tender beauty in her glance. He sees it all again, and he hears it all over again. The clock is telling it bitterly, bitterly: 'I take thee for better, for worse; till death do us part.' O God! she is drunk, drunk, drunk! Never, never again can his home be happy.

Another scene. Alone in her own room a lady looks into her mirror. She has just returned from paying some visits; she is dressed in the latest and richest fashion, everything about her room shows proof of

wealth and taste. She has been listening to all the kind congratulations of her friends. Her husband is of good position, rich, educated, a thorough gentleman, and handsome. She has been told so often what a lucky woman she is; and often she has overheard the poor but laughing-eyed and rosy-cheeked girls whom she passed in the street whispering: 'Surely God gives every happiness to some people.' That is all they know. She looks at her mirror. Within twelve months her cheeks have lost their roses, her lips their rippling music, her throat its rounded fulness, and her eyes their sparkling sunshine. Only a year ago, he married her for her pretty face; and now he tells her every day that he has found her to be a fool. Only a year ago, she married him because she thought him so kind, so loving, so absolutely her ideal man; and she has now found him to be a heartless cynic. He sneers at her affection; he resents her sympathy; he taunts her for the quick fading of her beauty; no effort on her part,

no unselfishness, no devotedness meets other recompense than a jibe ; no mistake or forgetfulness on her part ever escapes cruel analysis, nor is it ever forgotten. She loved him with all her heart ; she must love him still ; for see ! her large sad eyes are getting clouded ; yet she must not weep. Hastily she puts back into the drawer an old love-letter of his which she had been reading. She dare not let her own husband know of the most sacred and precious pearls which a woman's heart can offer to the man she loves—her tears. Oh, she has heard it so often, that biting sarcasm, that cruel wound, when, seeing her eyes red with weeping, he laughed, 'What, blubbering again ?' Oh the misery of her unknown heart-break ! Oh the inward agony, underneath all the gold and glitter, underneath all the music and dancing, underneath all the fashion and fun, underneath all the mockery ! Oh the inward agony of her unhappy home !

We have thought of how happy home should be. That glorious ideal, in all the

bright and beautiful revelation of its truth, in all the simple and endearing charm of its nearness to the heart, floods with rapture yet girds with strength the souls of those whose homes are happy ; but it haunts, with the uncomprehended pain of a loss acutely felt, though only vaguely known, the lives of those who sadly, perhaps bitterly, contrast their dream of that ideal with the reality of their unhappy home. Must this be so ? Is such unhappiness always inevitable ? Nay ! Nay ! many and many a home now dreary, dismal, disconsolate, might easily be blessed and brightened. There is no home so unhappy but that upon it there might yet fall a gentle ray from Heaven, bringing to it patience if not peace, generous unselfishness if not mutual sympathy, and noble devotedness if not love. All the causes from which may come the unhappiness of a home may be grouped under three chief ideas ; in the first place there may be downright sin or wilful fault ; in the second place there may be

natural unsuitedness or the inevitable clash of uncongenial characters; in the third place there may be selfishness whether it be conscious or unconscious. The first heading includes all unhappiness which is distinctly blameworthy. The second heading includes such unhappiness as is directly beyond the will's control. The third heading includes that unhappiness which arises not from deliberate fault, nor from indeliberate unfitness, but from the failing to appreciate or to apply the real source and standard of Christian Friendship. Now, to remove all those causes of unhappiness, you have given into your hand from God a triple omnipotence, divine indeed in its efficacy, yet human in its ease; against sin, you have the strength of Christian holiness; against uncongenial character, you have the balm of a tender grace; against selfishness you have the power of true love. Meditate a while with me upon all that this may mean for the full and enduring happiness of your home.

All nations have always looked on marriage as a necessary safeguard of morality; nor can even Christian holiness do without its help. St. Paul emphatically declares that one end of the great Sacrament of Matrimony is the shielding of virtue by the avoidance of vice. On this point St. Augustine eloquently and frequently insists, especially when defending the holiness of Marriage against the brutal heresy of the Manicheans. It has been very truly remarked by an old English author that, 'Marriage was in the world before sin and is now the greatest natural preventive of sin in the world. . . . Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities and churches, and heaven itself.' Much more in our days is holy Marriage needed not only for personal righteousness but also for the common weal. Our modern civilisation has made the occasions of evil easy, often inevitable. It has multiplied them millionfold; it has set them everywhere. Again, it has relaxed almost all

restraint upon the freedom, caprice, or indulgence of the young. Furthermore, our modern civilisation has shifted its moral principles to suit the whim of pleasure, and it has widened its moral patronage so as to approve of, or at least tolerate, vices that are scientifically controlled if they be respectably cloaked. Now with all these wild winds of temptation, with all these swift though unseen currents of passion, with all these rocks around and shoals beneath, with no religious aim to guide the course, with no high thought to trim the sail, with no resolute holiness to grasp the helm, with no home of its own as harbour of refuge, with no love of its own as safe anchorage, how will the young heart escape shipwreck of its innocence? The state of bachelorhood is an unnatural state, and, unless it be chosen or accepted with resolute holiness for a high motive, it is a bad state. Many cannot marry, to whom God will give greater grace, but they must themselves have greater earnestness. But parents who prevent, for the sake

of their own selfish gain, or from some sordid or stupid worldly motive, the early marriage of their children, will, on the day of doom, behold with horror and dismay the depths of iniquity into which the souls of their sons were hurled by their cruel crime.

On the other hand, to the married holiness is easy. Their home shelters them from the dangers amidst which the unmarried often perish. Their married love gives them the strength of a great aim in life, and the support of a great comfort. Wherefore since it is easy for married people to be thoroughly good, so they have no excuse that sin should enter within their home. But there is also another reason, full of awe and dread responsibility, why those married should be holy. That they are wedded ' for better, for worse ' has a deep, a terrible, an eternal meaning. When you plighted your troth, you thereby took upon yourself that you must answer for the soul of your wife or husband. If you be not holy, you are using an almost resistless power

to damn the soul that is wedded to your own. If you are holy, your life must be lifted up Heavenward, and with your life, if your prayer is faithful as your love is true, the life that is bound to you by the blessed bond of God's Sacrament, shall also, even if it be only at the end, be brought to Heaven.

Wherefore, you whom God has blessed in the life of one love keep sin far outside your soul. Be earnest in the fulfilment of every Christian duty, be eager in the acceptance of every Christian grace. But most of all, be absolutely staunch and unshakeably stern in the defence of your home against the two great enemies of its happiness. First, let the honour of your married love be ever without spot or blemish. Let no faintest trace of unworthy flirtation, let no slightest speck of unbecoming levity ever tarnish the chaste beauty of your Marriage vow. Secondly, keep far from you, or if it come near you crush with desperate determination, the Demon that fosters every woe within our unhappy land,

the Demon that breathes every disorder within each unhappy home, the Demon drink. Thus keep sin from your door, and you shall avoid one great cause of the darkness, dreariness, desolation and despair that haunt unhappy homes.

Again, it is a sad fact that the unhappiness of some homes arises from a cause which appears to be irremediable, namely, the antagonism of natural unfitness or the clash of uncongenial character. It is the result of a rash rush into Marriage without full and mutual knowledge. There is much truth in the old saying 'Marry in haste and repent at leisure.' Many a time the foolish enthusiasm of a love that did not look beyond the surface has drawn two incompatible lives into a union of unremitting misery and unavailing regret. Yet the haste which brings remorse is not the mere hurry of time, nor only the inexperience of youth, but rather the step, whether fast or slow, that is not guided by mutual understanding, not merely of taste

but of temperament, not merely of manner but of mind, not merely of appearance but of character. It is indeed evident that in some cases the choice is made with mad recklessness. That girl has herself to blame for her after wretchedness who marries a handsome drunkard. So too a man who is naturally sensitive, irritable and unforgiving should not marry a girl because she has the face of an angel if she also has the temper of a demon. Neither ought a girl of warm sympathies and enthusiastic ideals to marry a man who has no heart and whose intellectual horizon is bounded by the price of cattle and the comforts of his table. If young people put clearly before their mind the idea that Marriage is not to be only the romantic courtship of two lovers, but the lasting and thorough sympathy of two friends, they will, with easy instinct and true insight of the heart, realise whether or not they can trust their very mind and life and soul into each other's keeping.

But when the rash step has been taken, when the dream of their courtship has disappeared and the stern reality of constant intercourse makes it clear to husband and wife that they have made a mistake in their marriage, is there no remedy, no hope ? First, beware lest you come to this conclusion too suddenly. There is a perilous period in early married life, when the novelty wears away, when mutual deference is forgotten and mutual considerateness overlooked, when the matter-of-fact routine and unsentimental monotony of daily life occasion difference of opinion and danger of quarrel. It is the time when they come first to see and feel each other's little shortcomings and trivial defects. If, during this short perilous period, they exercise mutual self-restraint, mutual patience, and mutual broadmindedness, they will only become more true and fast friends than ever they had been before.

At this point, let me offer to those newly married an advice of most grave moment.

Mutual forbearance and much enduring patience with most tolerant sympathy and with most forgiving affection, are most absolutely needed when the first glamour of early fondness begins to wane, when the first novelty of new acquaintanceship begins to weary, and when close, constant intimacy brings under each other's notice the shortcomings, the failings or the faults of husband and of wife. This is a period of crisis. If they be narrow, unsympathetic, exacting towards each other, the little rift will widen into discord, and mayhap end in disaster. If they be mutually broadminded and bighearted, this crisis will only bind their hearts more closely together with the tender bond and endearing charm of mutual gratitude for mutual forgiveness, and mutual trust in mutual generosity. Listen to the wise words of a quaint old author: 'Husband and wife are much concerned to avoid all offences of each other, especially in the beginning of their married life. Every little thing can

blast an infant blossom, and even the breath of the South can shake the tendrils of the vine when first they begin to curl like the locks on the brow of an infant boy. But, when by age and consolidation they stiffen into the hardness of a stem, and have, by the bright glances of the sun and the warm breathing of the wind, brought forth their clusters, they can endure the storms of the north and yet never be broken. So, the early affections of marriage are watchful and observant, jealous and busy, inquisitive and careful, and apt to take alarm at every unkind word. For infirmities do not manifest themselves in the first scenes, but in the succession of daily intercourse, and they are not set down to chance or weakness, when they first appear, but to want of love; and what appears ill at first usually affrights the inexperienced man or wife, who makes unfair conjectures on it, and fancies mighty sorrows out of the proportions of a slight forgetfulness. Plutarch compares a new marriage "to a ship

before its beams are rivetted, when a slight shock may dissolve its tender compaginations. But when the joints are stiffened by a firm compliance and proportioned bending, scarcely can it be broken but by the fury of fire or by the violence of steel."'

If, however, there be no gainsaying the fact that the two are absolutely unsuited to each other, we must seek for some heroic remedy and for a divine balm. Use first the natural helps which any kind friend would suggest to you. You must face the fact indeed honestly, but be patient. Bear with what you cannot avoid. To worry over trouble makes it more intense. To talk at random about trouble multiplies it manifold. Do not brood over it, but make the best of it. Keep your own mind calm, your own temper unruffled, your own heart hopeful, and your life must lose most of its bitterness. Nay! your own patience will produce patience in the mind and heart to which you are wedded. In order to strengthen and secure your

patience, add considerateness. You will never know all the good qualities that are hidden under the defects of your partner until you have studied them in the clear, though bitter, atmosphere of a thoughtfulness which is without cloud or prejudice, even when your heart seems frozen and your life blighted.

But there is a balm that is divine. It is the grace of the holy Sacrament of Marriage. It has the omnipotence of God and it has the winningness of Christ. This dear and blessed grace can create the power of love. You must help its divine action, not only by your earnest and incessant prayer, but also by lifting up your patience to unselfish generosity, and by enhancing your human considerateness with the heroic devotedness of a divine duty. Begin by gentle patience and considerate thoughtfulness. Begin your courtship all over again. Win now the love which perhaps you have never won before. Neglect no trifling artifice of love. Use each possible attraction of love. Give

all the love you can, and you can win all the love that belongs to you by the divine right of the Plain Gold Ring. God will be with you. Be generous in your thought and action. Be devoted in your duty. Generous devotedness to your divine duty will develop a new strange strong love within your own heart, and this human love of yours, born of a divine grace, will give you the resistless power of love to conquer, and in conquering to bless.

There is something more precious than gold, something more noble than rank, something more beautiful than grace of form or bloom of feature, something dearer far than life—it is love. Yet you cannot buy it with all your treasure, nor can you conquer it with the sword. A crown on your head will give you no claim to it, nor will the orders or medals that flash on your bosom bring it nearer your heart. It cannot be measured in miles, counted by years, or weighed with gems; no law can coerce its coming,

and no prison can fetter its freedom. It may escape from you beyond the clouds, or it may meet you in a cottage. No science can catch its secret, nor can art copy its spell. No eloquence can utter its meaning, and music is only its echo. Love is so great, so mysterious, so divine, that God is love, and all true love, when human, is the likeness of God in a heart. Ah, brethren, brethren, would you reap the sacred fruitfulness of life? Would you revel in the sunshine, without which there is no brightness, no blessing for wedded life? Would you win a worth more rich than wealth, a joy more sweet than pleasure, a triumph more rapturous than honour? Would you secure the boon which makes the heart happy and the home a heaven? Ah, did I say that love is never bought? Nay, it is not bought of man, but it may be bought of God. For God alone can bid the soul to thrill, or tell the heart to throb. God alone is Lord of love. Now God, the Great Lord of love, will give true human love to

those who, wedded by the sacred Sacrament of love, implore of Him, that they may truly love each other. For Marriage with its duty of devotedness brings its tender grace of affection, and to those who offer at God's altar their gifts of humble worship, and of earnest prayer, shall be granted by God the full force and warm flood of the endearing and faithful friendship of the Plain Gold Ring.

This leads me to another thought; the crowning thought of all, as it is of all others not only the foundation but the fulfilment. It is this: the real root of unhappiness in home is that there is selfishness where there should be affection. It is that love is misunderstood. Love is sometimes understood to be the passing glow of mere outward admiration or the superficial effervescence of mere sentiment. But love to be real must be rooted in deep esteem of character and it must be fed by the sympathy of kindred souls. Too often love is only feeling or

emotion, and love like this is tainted with selfishness. There is an utter difference, often overlooked, between affections that are selfish and those that are devoted.

An affection may be in a sense true and yet be self-centred. It may give much, but it may require more. It may warmly love, and yet it may only love in order that its love may flow back again with increase to itself. It will bestow no tenderness except for strict recompense of tenderness. It is above all a bargain. It goes out, from itself, but only in order to gather harvest of fondness and garner it within its own store. Hence, it is, in a sense, selfish. For such a love separation means forgetfulness, and 'Good-bye' is a sentence of death. It can no longer bask in the sunshine of a beloved smile. It can no longer listen to a voice, the tones of which had become a bewitching music to its inward ear. It can no longer linger near a presence whose mysterious power made time so short and days so bright,

and home so happy. It can no longer live, for it has lost the breathing influence that kept its love aflame. Thus when it leaves, it dies. There is another kind of love, the love that is devoted. It gives, yet never counts the cost. It toils, yet never asks reward. It suffers, yet it will not seek to trouble others for balm to heal its wounds. If love be rendered to it back for love, it treasures it with wondering gratitude. Not for this does it love. It loves that it may give. It loves that it may labour. It loves, and only asks for this, that it be still allowed to love. Such love is love indeed. It is self-sacrificing. It is devoted. For love like this there is no forgetfulness. Even the pain of banished presence makes it more attached. In absence it loves not less, but more. As it does not serve for guerdon of outward sign; as it does not serve for pay of inward fondness; so, it cannot be measured by miles nor can it be hindered by absence. It does suffer pain, intense pain,

at parting, because it can no longer be near to help, or to comfort, or to gladden. But, when the union of material presence is sundered it can soar to a higher region, where, above the change or clash of material circumstance, even when 'Good-bye' is said, even when there is one home no more, yet through the union of human sympathy friends remain one heart for ever.

Does this ideal seem too high? Nay! it is the only ideal of the love of Christian Marriage. 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it.' Did Christ count the cost? Did Christ stint His Heart Blood? Did Christ measure the devotedness of His love? Wherefore, Christian husbands, love your wives in every great and noble way; in every way kind, courteous, considerate, unselfish. Never forget that married life must be a perpetual courtship. Be always patient with woman's moods; be always thoughtful towards woman's ways. Thus shall you draw

her love ever towards you and bind it each day with warmer bond and fuller fondness to your own heart. Thus shall you present her life to yourself 'not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing; but it shall be holy and without blemish.'

So, too, Christian wives, reverence your husbands. Let your affections twine round your husband's life with gentle tendril and perennial bloom to make it beautiful, till with strange power, quiet as the growth of grass that pierces the rugged sod, yet strong as the gravitation that steadies the stars, you make him good and great. Thus, the truest, tenderest, mightiest friendship of earth shall knit your two hearts into the one love of Home, so that even in this vale of tears you shall journey in happy peace hand in hand Heavenward.

FIFTH LECTURE

THE HOMELESS

FIFTH LECTURE

THE HOMELESS

'To the orphan thou shalt be a helper.'—Ps. x. 14.

The change which Christ brought over the face of the earth was indeed wonderful in its own divine success; it was also startling in its contrast with the world that had been before. To set the stern cross to bar the pursuit of pleasure; to make lowliness, not proud self-reliance, the standard of worth; to place the vocation to poverty above the worship of wealth; to proclaim the peace of universal brotherhood where there had been only the fierce fang of the human tiger or the cold coil of the human serpent, to bid men to love their very enemies; surely this

God alone could conceive, this could Christ alone accomplish. Yet it is still more strange that Christ should have taken as the supreme test of His own truth, that His first thought and highest honour should have been for the poor. Indeed the proof which Christ gave of own His Divine Messiahship, as most evident in its truth and most triumphant in its forcefulness, was that 'the Good Tidings are preached to the poor.' To us indeed this contrast is less vivid than it was to the old Pagan world; for, even the outer darkness has been illumined by the light that shineth in its midst, and even though they do not realise the fact, our modern Pagans are gentle in their kindness, and generous in their philanthropy only because of the teaching of Christ. Wherefore a chief mark of the real Christian is pity for the poor; while the influence of Christ has so far developed the gentler and nobler possibilities of our human nature as to make even the modern atheist quite a different

social being to the sensual or savage characters of old. Thus, in our age it is easy to be kind in such ways as regard the giving of food, shelter, raiment, or even amusement to the poor. But the Christian is called to a kindness that looks not merely to the earthen shrine but also to the spirit, not merely to the wants of the animal man, but also to his soul-thirst and hunger of the heart.

Doubtless you are deeply touched when you hear of some poor waif who has died of starvation on the roadway near your door, or when you see a child, half-naked, with bloodless cheek and pleading eye, shivering in the snow of the winter street. Do you not sometimes feel a pang when, as you sit at your comfortable repast by your own happy fireside, you think of the millions of your brother men who have not a crust to eat or a roof to shelter them. Oh! think what a blessed thing it is to bless the poor and to receive their blessing. Therefore teach

your children to love the poor. Let the alms or comfort, which you are able sometimes to give to the poor, pass through your children's hands. This will enhance the holiness of your giving; it will brighten the blessing of the poor; and it will cherish deep in your child's heart the true spirit of the Heart of our kind Christ.

But suffering, in the present Providence of God, is most often the safe sure pilgrim-path towards Paradise, and therefore a blessing in disguise. Sorrow, too, may have its secret treasure store of tender happiness, and many a home that was drear and disconsolate in bright days has had the hearts of those who dwelt in it drawn closely together in loving sympathy by the strain and stress of days that were dark. Therefore I have spoken little about the suffering or sorrow which may fall upon a home, for they cannot darken or dull the real happiness of its true deep love, since it is most true that 'there is no love so great as the love that is rooted

in pain.' Wherefore, passing from the mere outward aspect of physical suffering or material sorrow we will think about the moral desolateness of those who have no home.

In one way civilisation is very cruel. With the pitiless precision of a machine, with the strength of the steam's stroke or with the speed of the electric spark, it does its magnificent work magnificently.

But while the corn is made ready for our use, the chaff is thrown aside or trampled down ; while the strong swimmer is carried onward to the top, the weak or hapless are crushed or drowned ; while the comfort or prosperity of some is multiplied, the misery of others is made more intense, their effort to escape rendered more hopeless. There is no Sahara so sterile or so stern as a civilised city. Within that wide weird wilderness of iron, of wood, and of stone there are indeed thronging multitudes of men and women, but most of them have hands of iron and brains

of wood, because their hearts are stone. Within that barren desert there are countless stores of food, but the food is hidden away between wooden beams and secured with iron lock. Where the savage wind charges in frantic rage down the street, and where the pitiless hail rattles its musketry, there is many a shelter, but the shelters are shut with walls of brick or of stone and fastened with iron bolt or with iron bar. Through that wide wilderness of iron, of wood, and of stone, the waif may shiver by night and travel by day till it die, but the waif can find no spot whereon to rest, it can find no food to eat, and the men or women who pass it by are not men or women for it. If the waif were away in the field or the forest it might find a tree or a hedge to crouch under and it might find a root or a berry to eat; but the poor waif is lost in the desert in the stern and sterile Sahara of a civilised city. Even should the waif find work, if it be without a home it must face alone the

murderous waters of the selfish and cynical world. Upon the ruthless waves of that civilised tide, the homeless orphan is cast. There is no hand to lift it up, no voice to guide it on. Upon it the wild wind of adversity may beat; the stream of civilised selfishness may cast it on the bare sand or crush it against the rock, but amidst the wide wilderness of that human sea, where strength or stratagem struggle in civilised savagery of strife, that little heart has no spot on earth whither to turn and no one to love. Only an orphan waif, lonely and alone, that struggles for a while against the harsh bitter waves of the world, until it breaks its heart and sinks and disappears.

In the physical order of things the conflict of forest or of the field is decided by the fang or by the claw, while the war amongst men, once waged with the arrow or with the spear, is now elevated to the more scientific butchery of the rifle or of the bomb. In the social order the weapons are of finer finish and

of more fatal excellence; for no bloodshed of battle has ever brought such agony, or death of the body such woe, or anguish of the heart such despair or degradation of the soul as follows on the war for wealth. As the victory oscillates from side to side, both the victor and the vanquished meet with an always different yet always deadly doom. In its triumph wealth begets excess, decrepitude, sloth, luxury, immorality, heartlessness, cynicism. In its defeat poverty breeds disease, ignorance, slavery, hypocrisy, bitterness, rancour, crime, hatred against man's law, and repining against God's providence. One or other of these fates is the doom towards which wealth tends to hurl the victims which it has flung into seething struggle and fratricidal war. The higher aspirations of man's moral nature tend in some slight measure, and the Divine influence of Christ tends in a most marvellous manner, to mitigate or, in time and season, to remove the horrors of social feuds. But the evil is inherent in the selfishness of

man's nature, and it is greed for gold. It will work out its own terrible way if it be not controlled and held by the hand of God. Good laws may indeed help to repulse the assault of the financial desperado or to ward off the stab of the commercial assassin, but even good laws cannot disarm the murderers of the Stock Exchange and they are powerless to prevent the doom of the victims crushed under the car of the world's Moloch, Mammon. Even the best laws must fail to achieve complete success, for by aiming at the common good, they inevitably cripple or crush some amongst the weak or luckless. As the force of man cannot reach beyond the power of the mailed fist, so the laws of man cannot reach above the power of the clever brain. The brightness which you behold and the good which you welcome come not from matter nor from the law of man, but from the blessing of pity. The happy sunshine and the freshening dew that cheer and foster the moral world, the gentle thoughtfulness and the generous help that

soften and make fruitful the stern and sterile desert of human life, the light and love that renew the earth, come, not from earth, but from Heaven, not from man but from God. It is the aid of angels brought by human hands, and it is the kindness of Christ, poured out through human hearts.

There is many a heart that is homeless even within its home ; for, there is many a home that is no home. Listen to the rippling laughter of the children ! Look at their merry frolic ! Hush ! they hear a knock ; they are at once silent, sedate, sad. But it is only a stranger or visitor, and their laughter ripples forth again, and again their little feet patter about in merry frolic. Hush ! the sound of a coming step. Ah ! now the light of the home is darkened and its atmosphere is chilled. A gloom hangs over it and the children are under the constrain of dread and the keen though unconscious feeling of an instinctive distrust. It was their mother who entered. Alas ! it often happens that parents

do not understand that their first duty, their highest privilege, is to win the confidence of their children. Thus only can their teaching prove fruitful, their influence beneficial, their formation of character fortunate, their moral training lasting. Only thus can Father and Mother make their memory an endearing and elevating recollection to their children. Only by tender condescension and by gentle trustfulness can Father or Mother open out the hearts of their little ones and make them feel, in most exquisite simplicity as well as in most loving frankness, thoroughly at home in their home.

But the time comes when the young, whether brought up in a happy home or homeless, may, by the blessed bond of Christian Marriage, enter into their own home. This question of Marriage, even when looked at from the standpoint of mere human reason, must be always one of thrilling interest and of absorbing importance. To our modern world it has also become one of serious difficulty,

and one which, if it be not answered by wide and willing obedience to the law of right reason, will work out its own answer with remorseless vengeance in the paralysis or death of nations. Should Marriage cease to hold the people's reverence, should it become rare amongst the young and robust, or should its hallowed bond be readily broken, a day must come, such as has often come before in history, when the fermenting and boneless mass of our effete civilisations shall be swept away by the inroad of some rough race, uncouth, savage, or barbarian it may be, but born of young married love and bred in hardy homes. A stern warning on this point has been given by its former President to the great Republic of the West. President Roosevelt has written grave and emphatic words on the need of Marriage for a nation's greatness, and of the need, in order that the hope of Marriage be fulfilled and its happiness secured, that there still ever sparkle and burn within the fancy and heart of the young the true although

old-fashioned romance of 'Love's Young Dream.' Economists indeed, who only calculate by statistics, or statesmen who only measure by rule of thumb, discover scientific obstacles to the frequency of marriages, and especially to unfinancial marriages amongst the young. But, in the first place, the frequency and sacredness of Marriage is the only promise, the only pledge of the future balance of brain and of the future robustness of body amongst a people; nor shall that improvident prudence, that financial folly, which seeks to limit population by wealth instead of computing wealth by population, fail in the future to meet its inevitable doom in the decrepitude of the nation. Again, in the second place, gold may madden men in their race for wealth, pleasure may make the heart as unsentimental as the mud, or cynicism harden it to flint, money may be plenty, pain as well as poverty may be rendered comparatively rare, parliaments as well as newspapers may proclaim that the country is prosperous, there may be

indeed, for the moment, a widespread material well-being, but will all this outlast the century? In truth, as the body is more than the raiment, and the mind nobler than the body, so is there something better than the business, the eating, or the enjoyment of a people; it is the spirit of a nation. A nation where early marriages are almost universal will have plenty of sons and daughters of sturdy frame and healthy mind, and such a race shall command a triumphant success in peace or war. Now, 'Love's Young Dream' has most, if not everything, to do with early marriages, and 'Love's Young Dream' is the dawn that brings the day of happy homes to human hearts. But, it is from happy homes that there comes forth the true spirit of a nation; and it is only the spirit of a nation that can give to it manliness to bravely work or war, and hardihood to triumphantly survive.

Some years ago, returning from New York, as we were nearing the Irish Coast, I waited on deck in order to catch the first glimpse of

the dear old land. There I found five men grouped together watching also for the first sight of the land of their birth. They were all Irishmen, but had been brought to America in infancy or youth, by parents who were poor. Now they were going back to visit the old country—all of them wealthy, most of them millionaires. In education, taste, and acquired character, they were thoroughly American. One of them started the question whether or no it would be better for Ireland to be one of the United States. They all answered 'no.' They all gave the same reason. It would be indeed better for Ireland, they said if in politics her people were not so painfully hysterical and so savagely intolerant; if in business matters they were not so dreadfully lazy, so hopelessly unenergetic, so despairingly unenterprising, so woefully wasteful, so fond of bad tea or worse whiskey, so careless about the use of soap or sweeping brushes. But, they added, although Ireland, if she were one of us, would soon become as smart as

America, she would lose something better which she now has and which we have not, her faith in God and the pure love of her homes.

A practical aspect of this problem is that while the light and warmth of real romance should always linger round the love of happy homes, yet this is never incompatible with common sense. Thus, when a maiden meets a man whom she esteems and likes, and whom she can trust to be kind towards her, she need not refuse his offer of marriage because she does not feel sentimental. Or when a young man admires a girl who is in every way a suitable match for him, he should not draw back or hesitate because he does not at all feel like the hero of a novel. 'The love that comes after marriage is better than the love that goes before.' The first lasts when sometimes the second wanes. Again while mercenary motives should not by themselves decide the fate which love should bless, yet a young fellow would be foolish to run the risk of

falling in love with an unsuitable person, and rather he would be wise to seek the society of an eligible girl on the chance that acquaintance may ripen into friendship, friendship lead to love, and love end in a happy marriage. So again parents are wanting in their duty towards their daughters when they bar their home against every possible suitor, nor ever let their girls leave the house except under police protection.

It is inhuman, it is criminal for parents to give their girls in marriage to men whom they cannot love. Listen to St. Ambrose: 'It is sad when maidens are with their own money sold into slavery. In this regard, servants have a happier lot than women who are thus married; for, the former receive wages, while the latter with their own dowry buy their own fetters and pay dear for their loss of liberty.' Again: 'Nay rather, as the wife must leave father and mother, so should she, if she is to be no orphan, find them in her husband.'

But it may be that occasions have not occurred or that opportunities have been lost, and the likelihood, if not the possibility, of Marriage is gone. Old bachelors deserve no pity. For, in the first place, a man much more easily than a woman, can settle down contentedly to single selfishness, provided he have a good income, a good digestion, a good conscience, and a good club. In the second place, for the old bachelor 'it is never too late to mend.' However old or ugly he may have become, he may always meet with some kind good woman willing as his wife to mind his servants or to nurse his gout.

For the old maid it is otherwise. He were a daring man who should venture to fix the exact period at which maidenhood merges from youth into age. He might, however, without rashness perhaps suggest that when a young girl reaches fifty she ought to change her pink blouse and rakish hat for a sensible bonnet and dark dress. But, however this may be, the old maid should not be maligned.

A cross, peevish, hippish, stingy, intolerant old thing, who elevates mischief-making into a fine art and selfishness into an exact science ; —that is only the caricature ; it is only the rare exception ; it is not the real type. The true type of the old maid is the tidy, thrifty little body, bright, busy, cheerful, chatty, prim indeed, precise, sedate, but always active in kind work for the poor or in kind sympathy for the sad, and with a strange enduring favouritism for the bad bold boy of the family. Many a poor scamp has stopped on the downward path towards dishonour and made another big honest effort to keep steady, for the sake of the dear old aunt who always takes his part at home. The old maid may have been always an old maid. She never wished to be married ; she was never meant to be married ; but to the last as from the first she has her own useful, happy, holy place in the world. Or, again, the old maid may have been one who might have married, and who would have made any good kind man's

heart happy and his home holy. But in our days many and many a rose is 'born to blush unseen.' Somehow the chance never came, and she is now a gentle, kind, charitable, elderly spinster. Or, yet again, the old maid may have 'known and loved and lost.' Under that quiet face there may be a memory, fresh as the grass that grows over a distant grave, and dear as the heart that is dead, where her own heart is buried. Or, there may be a deep bitter wound that has never healed and that still weeps red tears, although no one in the wide world suspects that the calm old maid ever cared for anybody, or knew the anguish of a love that was thrown away on one unworthy or despised by one who was perhaps more unworthy still. A woman's heart is so full of deep devotedness that if it has no one to be kind to, it sours into selfishness. This is the reason why sometimes a disappointed woman who broods over her lost opportunities, develops that strange unnatural selfishness which generally takes the form

either of a silly hippishness about her health, or of an hysterical sentimentality about her soul. But, this is also the reason why the real old maids all over the world are in the eyes of truthful, tender, trustful children like the fairy godmother of the nursery tale. Yet, while the old maid must needs give kindness, she also needs to get the sympathy and friendship of a happy home.

Look upon this picture: the merry schoolgirl at play. Her young light curls float on the air as she bounds swiftly forward. The rippling peals of her laughter ring round as she rushes into the contest of sport, or a wild scream of delight announces her triumph. Upon that fair young face there is no wrinkle, as upon that pure young soul there is no soil. In those bright young eyes there is no mist, no shadow, as upon that glad young heart there hangs no cloud, no care. The game is over and she runs home. When the happy day is done she dreams happy dreams of a future happy with sunshine and song. Look

now upon what that future has brought. She sits alone in a small, chill room. Her aged figure is bent with the weary weight of long, sad years. White or grey locks have taken the place of her bright, brown, abundant tresses. Upon her brow is written in many a deep line the story of anxiety or of disappointment. The thin, pale, emaciated face tells its own tale of 'trial by hunger.' The wasted fingers seem to have been worn away by fruitless struggle with wood, or iron, or stone. But in the eyes, mournful with memories of hardship, ingratitude, or loss, yet serene with the supernatural calm of patience, you behold the record of a lifetime passed in unrecognised goodness, or perchance immolated in unrecognised self-sacrifice. As she sits in that small, chill room, a tidy, calm, gentle, uncomplaining old maid, you see all around unmistakable signs of appalling poverty, and there is a sense of loneliness as drear and as hopeless as though she were lost in a desert of sand or wrecked on the rocks of a desolate shore.

How came this to be ? Alas ! Alas ! It was a life that was doomed by the natural accident of sad circumstance or by the inhuman action of civilised selfishness, and there was no angel of pity to come to the rescue. It was a life spent in ceaseless, hard, unrequited, but honourable toil for her daily bread, and now that her hands have lost their strength, now that her heart has lost its hope, she can gain no money and she can get no help. Or perhaps it was a life once full of happy promise, but 'many a rose is born to blush unseen,' and the rose that is most beautiful is not always the rose that bends its fair head over the roadway to win the admiration of the passers-by, but rather the rose which offers the sweet fragrance of its heart to heaven in some secluded spot. Or, again, that life may have been devoted to the good of others with the unselfishness of an unknown heroine, and with the constancy of an unknown Saint. It may have been an old infirm father to whose care the girl's life was

generously sacrificed. Or it may have been that a mother's old age was embalmed and blessed by the immolation of her daughter's love. Or it may have been that the orphan children of a brother or of a sister had no one in the wide world to shield or to save them except the dear old aunt, who was father and mother to the little ones until they grew big and busy, and went their way leaving the old, old aunt alone, too weak to work and too high-minded to beg. Or yet again, it may have been that death broke the prop of the home till it fell into ruin, or that some business disaster swept away all the fortune of the family into the hungry waves of the selfish world. Oh! many and many a noble type of most noble womanhood is hid under the bent form or pale face of the old maid. Yet we never dream that the angels love to linger near her; we never dream of it because we think like the world, and the world only knows that she is old, feeble, clad in poor clothes, and lives in a garret. The promise

of her life has now vanished, but its honour remains. The work of her life has been sacrificed, but its reward is at hand. Yet it is sad that one, blameless, unselfish, devoted, should be left in old age abandoned, helpless, homeless, alone.

Wherefore you, whose homes are happy, let your own happiness flow forth upon the homeless. 'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.' Be merciful towards those who need our help of hand or kindness of heart. Ah, it is so true! 'the quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth like the gentle dew from Heaven. It is twice blessed. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' There is, amongst the bright green grasses of our fields, a tiny tender triple leaf, that stretches forth its gentle stem with tendrils which, where they rest, take root. It is our Irish Shamrock. So, too, from the simple pure and happy homes of our dear Catholic Celtic land, a fresh and fertile friendship spreads around the quiet charm and living

sap of its fond and faithful blessing. Be merciful in your help-giving ; be kind in your friendship. That is the crowning happiness of happy homes ; for, ' blessings like birds come home to roost.'

There is a Home beyond the everlasting hills where with Mary dwells the Child—God of her Mother's heart. Thither are brought all the blessings that you give or get. Thither shall you too one day, please God, be brought, that as you have been a helper to the orphan, a friend to the homeless, and as you have made your own life holy in making your home happy, so shall you share with Jesus and with Mary their own dear Home that knows no tear, no tempest, no death, no good-bye, but where untroubled peace and love unutterable shall reign for ever and for ever.

SIXTH LECTURE

THE CRADLE AND THE GRAVE

SIXTH LECTURE

THE CRADLE AND THE GRAVE

'A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.'—Prov. xxii. 6.

Only the wail of an infant, yet that feeble cry has a strange power. It bears a message that is mysterious for the awfulness of its import. Only the wail of an infant—yet the father's heart thrills in answer with all the strongest and deepest vibrations of his manly devotedness, while the mother's heart is lifted up in an ecstasy of holy gratitude or bowed down in worshipful wonder before the revelation of a love that almost seems divine. Only the wail of an infant—yet it proclaims a mightier change than ever waited upon the

edict of an emperor ; it announces a coming more fraught with tremendous issues than ever clanged its trumpet tones from the heralds of a king. The sword and sceptre sway the outside world ; the child sways the world within. The law of nations stops with space and ends with time ; the child's influence reaches to the spirit, its future is eternal. The crown may conquer with steel or woo with gold ; the Cradle is the throne of love. Only the wail of an infant—yet the coming of the child has changed the Home. To father and to mother it has brought a new hope in life ; a new object in life to live for ; a new motive in life for earnest work and generous effort ; a new help towards holiness. Yea ! their babe has brought a new balm to soothe their sorrow, a new blessing to enhance their happiness, a new bond to bind more divinely together the loves that had been welded into one by the sacred clasp of the Plain Gold Ring. Only the wail of an infant—the proclamation indeed of a strange new power, the good

tidings of a strange new joy; but also the announcing of a strange new responsibility, the revelation of a strange new crisis. For, upon these two who bend over the Cradle, upon the wisdom, solicitude and love of its father and its mother hangs the fate of their child. Upon their choice hangs the future of this mysterious gift of God. Upon their fulfilment of their duty or their neglect of it depends, not only what way in life that infant shall hereafter walk, but also, to a degree that is appalling, the fixing of its eternal doom.

Wherefore the holy happy charge, held by divine right from God, of guiding and guarding the immortal soul which breathes within the tender limbs and feeble frame of the child, is one which must not be left to random thought or chance impulse, but one which must be undertaken with wise watchfulness and fulfilled with reverend love. A child must not be abandoned to the hazard of outside circumstance, nor cast aside to

follow the whim of its own stray instinct. A child is an Angel-Spirit breathed forth from the creative breath of God, yet clothed in living clay, thinking within a material brain, throbbing within a material heart, and therefore this Angel-Spirit, born of earth, must learn from others the way which it should walk in life, and upon others lean for its support. Wherefore, not only parents, but also all those who in any way share in their sacred privilege of teaching or training the child, should meditate upon the meaning of education in its highest and widest sense. Now true education includes both the formation of mind and the formation of character. We will dwell awhile upon these two ideas.

In our modern life, when learning is pursued with the rapidity of a motor car, and knowledge pounded into young people with the pressure of a steam-roller, education is often misunderstood as if it were the same thing as instruction. The two ideas are quite distinct. Instruction means the

putting of knowledge into the child's head, education means the cultivation of the child's powers. Instruction means that the child's brain is made a store-house for information ; education means that the child's brain is itself vitally developed. Instruction means at most a giving of food to the mind ; education means an evolution of the mind. It is, of course, clear that education includes some sort of instruction ; but it is also clear that any instruction which is not absolutely subordinate to education, is as unhealthy for the mind as promiscuous and excessive eating is for the body. In other words and briefly, the development and growth of the mind itself is to be looked to in the first place and above all ; consequently upon this, and only in conformity with it, instruction should be weighed and measured. Otherwise it is not education ; it is unhealthy 'cramming.'

The evolution of the mind requires that the mental faculties should be drawn out in their natural order, and developed in

balanced proportion. Hence Memory, which is one of the first faculties to bud, should be first helped by careful cultivation to blossom. Memory, when constantly, yet without over-straining, exercised in childhood, will remain always either actually retentive, or at least capable of being, by fresh culture, again restored. It is too late for grown people to create a memory. After Memory, and close upon it, follows Imagination. This magnificent faculty, frequently overlooked or underrated, is not only the very source of light and life to poetry and to oratory, but it is also needed to lead the way and steady one's steps in higher mathematics, as it has also been wisely called by Tyndall a guiding star to Exact Science. Imagination must be at first attracted by the nursery story. The mature mind which has never in childhood been nourished by the fairy-tale, is a mind which is paralysed on one side. After Memory and Imagination the Literary faculties, with their sense of rule, of symmetry, of accuracy

in thought, and of taste in expression, are best developed by the study of the language. Here, the natural order of things requires that Prose should go before the finer finish and more delicate appreciation of Poetry. Physical science should not precede, and although it may accompany, it would better follow the earlier lessons of literature. Lastly the mature faculties of logical reasoning should be called out and crowned by Mathematics and Philosophy. The reasons for these theories on education are to be found in the fact that those mental faculties are naturally first called into play and work most easily which are more immediately connected with our outward and obvious sense-perceptions, whereas those other faculties which are more intellectual require a finer and fuller elaboration of the brain, and therefore their work is done with greater difficulty and with harder mental strain.

These thoughts bring us to another matter, with which they are more closely interwoven

than might at first appear. It is the physical development of children. There is deep wisdom in the words of the old Roman, Juvenal, 'Mens sana in corpore sano,' 'A healthy mind in a healthy body.' The importance of this point is now better understood than it was in the days of our grandmothers. Sometimes, indeed, the exercise of girls is excessive; but for boys, plenty of hard exercise is essential to their moral as well as to their mental well-being. Nor are the boys' games to be forbidden because rough. A dash of danger is needed in order to bring out a boy's pluck and endurance. A rough tumble at Rugby football will make a boy manly; and even should it happen once in a way that a boy should break his leg, this is far better than that he should break his mother's heart.

Need I say one word about cleanliness? A healthy body, a tidy mind, an unsullied soul, each and all of them, are much helped by cleanliness, as they are much endangered

by dirt. Neglect, or even carelessness, on this point is not only detestable and abominable, it is also wrong.

The formation of a child's character is to be looked to before all else. On this point, consider first what qualities you want to develop; and secondly, the means which you must employ. The first of all mora. qualities is Truthfulness. Its importance in moral training cannot be exaggerated. Truth is the light of life. Truthfulness is the love of light, without which there can be no real good, no real loveliness in life. After Truthfulness comes Obedience; for the child well taught to obey may be trusted to unconsciously grow perfect in the other virtues of a child. The special moral qualities to be desired in a boy are the pluck that will face danger or difficulty, the decisiveness that will enable him to make up his mind like a man, and the industry that will make him turn out afterwards neither a dunce nor a drone, but a strong, sturdy worker in

the world. The special characteristics of a girl should be, with an exquisite maidenly modesty, Thrift, Tidiness and Taste.

Again, in the second place, we have to consider the means by which the moral qualities may be developed in the child. At once, to your mind it will occur that patience and gentleness are needed in order to foster the child's growth in good, while firmness is required in order to prevent waywardness from becoming warped into wilfulness or bent into obstinacy. But 'nagging,' as it is called, frustrates the very end which it aims at; while neglect leaves the character to grow rank. But the most fatal fault on the part of parents is injustice or cruelty. No child will ever forget a cruel punishment wrongfully inflicted; and this, few children will ever forgive. Now, all the means by which the young life is to be brought up well and worthily, may be practically merged into one, and that one is Love. Many children are spoiled for want

of love; no child was ever spoiled by too much love. One only condition limits kindness so as to avoid excess. That one only condition is that the child obey. If the child be obedient no kindness is too much, no love too great.

Ah! let me plead the cause of the child's love. When that Angel-Spirit, God's mysterious gift, robed in living clay which yet shrouds from it the sight of Heaven, begins to look timidly forth through phantom forms and images of sense upon this strange exile earth, its wistful glances seek for something which it has not yet learned to know, but in a mysterious way it gropes towards an undiscovered spring, it gravitates towards a hidden bourn, for it feels the imperious yearning of an infinite thirst, and it feels the divine impulse of an eternal energy, until, dimly conscious of an absolute need and of a resistless power, it turns to those to whom it owes its human birth, to beg of them the one great boon of all its life

their love; and to offer to them the one great boon of all their life, its love. Ah! that little child-heart is starving for your sympathy, yet it is almost breaking with the precious burden of its tenderness. Ah! take the unalloyed treasures of this tenderness. Open wide the fullest and freshest fountains of your sympathy. Love your child and let your child love you. Thrust it not back upon itself by cold reserve, nor make it shrink for ever back within itself by the cruel wound which your hard word or harsh deed dealt it when all the fresh fervour of its impulsive affection was straining forward to cling to you. Nay! calm by many an endearing title or pretty name that timid little soul. By many a fond caress, with most affectionate forethought, soothe the frightened fluttering of that little heart which needs your love, and wants to love you. Let your love entwine itself round every aspiration, round every impulse of your child, that it may grow in full heart-knowledge of your love; for thus shall

the child best learn this most sacred lesson of life, the true, although reflected, likeness in father and mother of the love of our Father in Heaven.

The years pass by quickly. Soon the child has changed into the young man or young woman. It is the time when the fledglings begin to spread their wings, and flit away to find a spot where they shall build their own Home. Now while it is true that rash marriages, rushed into thoughtlessly for the sake of a pretty face or fascinating manner, are often followed by bitter years of barren regret, yet it is also true that when Marriage is entered into after prudent deliberation, it is better that the young people should not wait until they stiffen into old bachelors or crystallise into old maids, but that they should plight their troth to each other while the fancy is vivid and the heart warm, so that their union may have from the first, and keep to the last, the early romance and the enduring enthusiasm of 'Love's Young Dream.'

But should a divine call speak to the young soul, let it too be given at once to God. Waiting in the world, in obedience to worldly wisdom, in order to test the truth of this call, often results, amid the gloom of the world's impiety or amongst the seductions of the world's sin, in the loss of a real vocation. Often, even when a vocation is not lost, the fresh, soft, beautiful innocence of childhood is singed, if it be not burned, by the flame of a knowledge that is evil. The natural sign of a vocation is a natural fitness for the life; its supernatural sign is a spiritual attraction which draws the young soul gently and sweetly towards the desire and need of a higher heroism.

At last the brightness of Spring and the richness of Summer have given place to the deepening shadows of Winter. The vision of the Cradle has disappeared from the thought which must look forward when, upon the near horizon, looms the spectre of the grave. Yet many of our dearest memories and most

tender recollections turn towards the Old Folk at Home. Revere and love them still. Once your life and love had to lean on them ; now their life and love must lean on you. Revere and love them still. Their feebleness needs your pity ; their failings need your patience ; their faults need your generosity ; but their old age is a reason for your reverence, and their nearness to the grave is a reason for your love. Revere and love them still. Love not too late. Love them while they are with you. Love them while there is yet time to show them sympathy, to uphold them with your gentle help, to comfort them with your faithful tenderness. Love them while there is yet time to tell them your love. Love not too late. It is too late to ask forgiveness of the dead whom you slighted in life. It is too late to speak to the clay what you should have spoken to the warm heart. It is too late to show to the dust the reverence which you should have shown to the trembling hand or tottering feet. It is too late to write on the

tombstone the love which should have been written on the record of actual days. If you have not loved them in life, it is too late to love them when you stand by the Grave. Love not too late.

At Christmas-tide you adorn your home with the familiar old Holly and Ivy, and to your friends you heartily wish a Merry Christmas. But make your Home happy with kindness that is bright as the berries, with love that is ever-green. Most of all make your Home happy, make you Christmas merry for the child. Ah! let their childhood at least be happy. Hereafter they shall have their dark days, their bitter hours, their disappointments, their pain, their grief, perchance their despair. But at least let them look back on a happy childhood in their own old beloved Home. Make their Home happy. too, for the Old Folk. For some it will be their last Christmas with you before they sleep beneath the Grave.

On the first Christmas day, Mary, holy and happy Mother, held her Child-God to her

heart. May she not, then, have held that little hand and lifted it to bless the world? So may she now, being still His own darling Mother, take His Divine hand again in hers, and lift it aloft, and with it bless you and your Home, wishing you, in the truest, fullest, holiest sense a happy Easter; that thus, living now a life of holy love, you may have hereafter, in the glorious and eternal Eastertide of Heaven, where there shall be no tear, no cloud, no good-bye, not only the rapture of your immortal soul, not only the resurrection of your human heart, but also, in a divinely human way, with all its shadows changed to sunshine, with all its sorrow changed to joy, the resurrection of your own old Home, Sweet Home!

THE END

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO. LTD., COLCHESTER
LONDON AND ETON

26693

HQ
752
.K34

26693

Kane, Robert Joseph

AUTHOR

THE PLAIN GOLD RING.

TITLE

DATE DUE | BORROWER'S NAME

P6-BXT-094